Religione e altri mondi

Ipotesi che la Chiesa non esclude



«Cristo contestato», olio di Romano Gazzera. Sotto, «Mosè robotico», illustrazione di Ferruccio Alessandri (da «Grande Enciclopedia della Fantascienza» a cura di F. P. Conte, 1980)

Lassù qualcuno ci ama. E ama anche gli alieni

Può esserci nel cosmo vita intelligente oltre quella terrestre? Dopo le dichiarazioni dell'astronomo George Coyne, direttore della Specola Vaticana, ripercorriamo il pensiero di ecclesiastici e di pensatori cristiani

VITTORIO CATANI

In una recente intervista al «Corriere della Sera», il gesuita e astronomo George Coyne, direttore dal 1978 della Specola Vaticana di Castel Gandolfo, si è espresso a favore della possibilità che altri mondi ospitino vita intelligente. Secondo Coyne, su un argomento del genere la cautela della Chiesa è d'obbligo, e tuttavia si tratta di una ipotesi non escludibile a priori, soprattutto ora che si sono individuati pianeti che sembrerebbero di tipo terrestre, in orbita presso stelle lontane.

Non è certo la prima volta che studiosi cattolici affrontano il tema; ma le parole di Coyne assumono un senso particolare in quanto provenienti dal Vaticano. In realtà non si tratta solo di cercare un punto d'incontro fra l'interpretazione delle Sacre Scritture e le fredde acquisizioni della scienza (due ambiti di ricerca sostanzialmente estranei, eppure per molti secoli in conflitto: basti pensare all'odissea di Galileo). Oggi i tempi sono mutati e, sotto certi aspetti, una convergenza «di massima» fra religione e scienze astronomiche (e dovremmo aggiungere cosmologia, xenobiologia, planetologia...) è molto più plausibile di quanto non fosse un tempo. Ma è proprio questo passo in avanti che apre nuovi problemi religiosi, superabili forse solo a costo di drastici mutamenti di prospettiva.

È forse il caso di ripercorrere altre significative pronunce a favore della vita su altri mondi da parte di esponenti del mondo cattolico e cristiano. Esattamente quarantadue anni fa ebbero risonanza le dichiarazioni di un altro gesuita, padre Grasso. Su «La Stampa» del 24 gennaio 1960 apparve infatti un articolo con il seguente titolo: Gli eventuali abitanti di altri mondi non dovranno ubbidienza alla Chiesa. Il sottotitolo riportava: «Non avendo il peccato originale, gli altri esseri dell'universo potrebbero vivere in uno stato di felicità spirituale e materiale per noi inimmaginabile. E se fossero peggiori dell'Uomo, senza il dono della Redenzione? Non si esclude che solo a noi sia riservato un destino soprannaturale. Come interpretare i Libri Sacri? Una cosa è certa: non saranno inviati missionari spaziali». I toni oggi possono apparire un tantino retorici, ma già lasciavano trapelare alcune problematiche «forti», riprese nelle argomentazioni dello stesso Coyne.

Se poi ci affacciamo un tantino più indietro nel tempo, è d'obbligo citare il volume De l'infinito universo et mondi (1584) in cui Giordano Bruno già sosteneva che i pianeti fossero abitati. Molte opinioni del filosofo, tra cui quella di una Terra non al centro del cosmo, furono ritenute pericolose dall'Inquisizione romana. Bruno fu arrestato e dopo otto anni (1600) mandato al rogo: anche a causa dell'idea «eretica» della vita su altri mondi, cadeva una testa geniale e anticonformista.

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La maggior parte delle religioni ha sempre sostenuto che la vita (e in particolare l'Homo Sapiens) fosse originata da un «miracolo». La scoperta di una forma vitale aliena contraddirebbe l'ipotesi «miracolosa»? Forse no. E tuttavia, nell'evenienza detto evento perderebbe probabilmente, agli occhi di molti credenti, la sua caratteristica di fenomeno straordinario, unico, «significativo»: la specie umana non occuperebbe dunque alcun posto speciale nell'ordine delle cose. Ciò potrebbe modificare, nei credenti, la convinzione di un particolare legame esistente tra esseri umani e Dio, come sostenuto dalla religione: saremmo non più figli unici e prediletti. Comunque, sia noi sia gli alieni avremmo origine miracolosa.

Secondo altre opinioni, potrebbe anche venire riconsiderata la teoria dell'origine divina dell'intelligenza e della consapevolezza, se queste si verificassero indipendentemente da noi in altre zone dell'universo. Nel 1729 Ernest W. Barnes, vescovo di Birmingham, chiedendosi se non esistessero altre creature intelligenti dedusse che Dio avesse creato il cosmo proprio per avere una molteplicità di mondi abitati, e proprio da questa molteplicità poter far scaturire «più elevate forme di consapevolezza».

Sulla stessa linea, nel suo studio La cosmologia moderna e l'idea cristiana di Dio (1952), il cosmologo oxfordiano Edward A. Milne si chiedeva se non fosse «irriverente» ritenere che un Dio infinito dovesse «concentrare la sua Divina Intelligenza e le sue attività su un solo pianeta». Milne si pose anche il problema della Incarnazione: «Si tratta di un evento unico, o ripetuto anche su altri pianeti? Qualunque cristiano si ritrarrebbe con orrore dinanzi a una simile conclusione. E dunque, che ne sarebbe degli abitanti d'altri mondi se l'Incarnazione si fosse verificata solo sul nostro?». Milne giungeva alla conclusione che la Passione di Cristo varrebbe non solo per noi umani, ma per tutte le eventuali specie intelligenti.

Al contrario, nel 1956 il sacerdote-filosofo E. L Mascall obiettò che Dio si «fece uomo», e pertanto il Suo intervento nella storia «avrebbe senso solo in relazione all'Homo Sapiens». Su posizioni opposte il fisico e ministro anglicano John Polkinghorne, il quale nel 1992 affermò che «se esistessero degli omini verdi, Dio si incarnerebbe come omino verde». A tutto ciò parve rispondere il filosofo John Lucas, con un'argomentazione difficilmente eludibile: «L'abbandono di Cristo sulla croce da parte di Dio può aver avuto luogo soltanto una volta».

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Che ne dice la fantascienza. *Romanzi sul divino e g*

Con la fede tra le



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Va da sé che tutte queste argomentazioni diverrebbero di attualità pregnante anche se sulla Terra giungesse un semplice «messaggio» inequivocabilmente extraterrestre (per esempio, attraverso le apparecchiature radioastronomiche del progetto SETI, che utilizza una rete mondiale di radiotelescopi puntati verso migliaia di sistemi stellari, nella speranza di intercettare segnali radio di origine artificiale).

Interrogativi tutti puramente teorici, almeno finora, ma anche dalle difficili risposte. Per cui sembra altamente probabile che un «segnale» alieno (per non parlare di una «visita») sconvolgerebbe a vari livelli molte nostre acquisizioni: verosimilmente, anche le grandi religioni.

Che ne dice la fantascienza. *Romanzi sul divino e gli extraterrestri*

Con la fede tra le stelle

La fantascienza si è mostrata particolarmente sensibile alla estrapolazione di temi religiosi connessi con l'esistenza di vita extraterrestre o con future nuove tecnologie. Solitamente si tratta di una narrativa di tipo speculativo, scritta da autori spesso filosofi oltre che scienziati, con uno standard qualitativo diverso dalla fantascienza di semplice intrattenimento. La bibliografia è ricchissima. Nel romanzo *Un caso di coscienza* di James Blish (1959), si scopre che gli abitanti del lontano pianeta Lithia hanno fondato una società fraterna e felice che sembra adeguarsi al messaggio evangelico: non esistono guerre, violenze, ingiustizie. Il problema è che la psicologia dei Lithiani non ha mai portato a elaborare una qualsiasi idea di «divinità». Padre Ramon Ruiz-Sanchez, ecclesiastico della Compagnia di Gesù, viene inviato dalla Terra su Lithia per approfondire la situazione, che sembrerebbe quasi una messinscena del Maligno per dimostrare l'inutilità di Dio; ma l'esito della storia sarà tragico.

Insegnante di Inglese medievale a Cambridge, erudito, amico di Tolkien, Clide S. Lewis scrisse negli anni '40-50 una trilogia di romanzi fantascientifici a sfondo religioso, imperniati sulla esistenza del Bene e del Male. Dei tre volumi, *Perelandra* ha per teatro il pianeta Venere e ripropone su di esso, sotto altra veste, la storia di Adamo ed Eva: ma stavolta Satana è sconfitto e il Paradiso non viene perduto. In *La ricerca di Sant'Aquino* (1951), Anthony Boucher presenta una intelligenza artificiale costruita dall'uomo, e che a un certo punto dichiara di credere in Dio: è una svolta epocale, chi potrebbe mai confutare una «macchina logica» per eccellenza? In *Poiché sono un popolo geloso* (1954), Lester Del Rey descrive l'invasione di mostruosi e alieni. Costernati, i terrestri scoprono che gli invasori adorano la Croce e il nostro stesso Dio. Di fronte al risentimento dell'umanità a questa notizia, accade l'inaudito: il Signore ritira la sua biblica promessa di protezione al genere umano e la trasferisce agli alieni. In un accesso di estremo orgoglio, l'umanità si ribellerà al suo Dio.

(v. cat.)

L'INCONTRO RAVVICINATO DEL PRESIDENTE

Un oggetto metallico di una decina di metri atterrò sulla pista. Eisenhower salì a bordo del disco. I radar erano stati disattivati...



di **Umberto Visani**
Milano - Febbraio

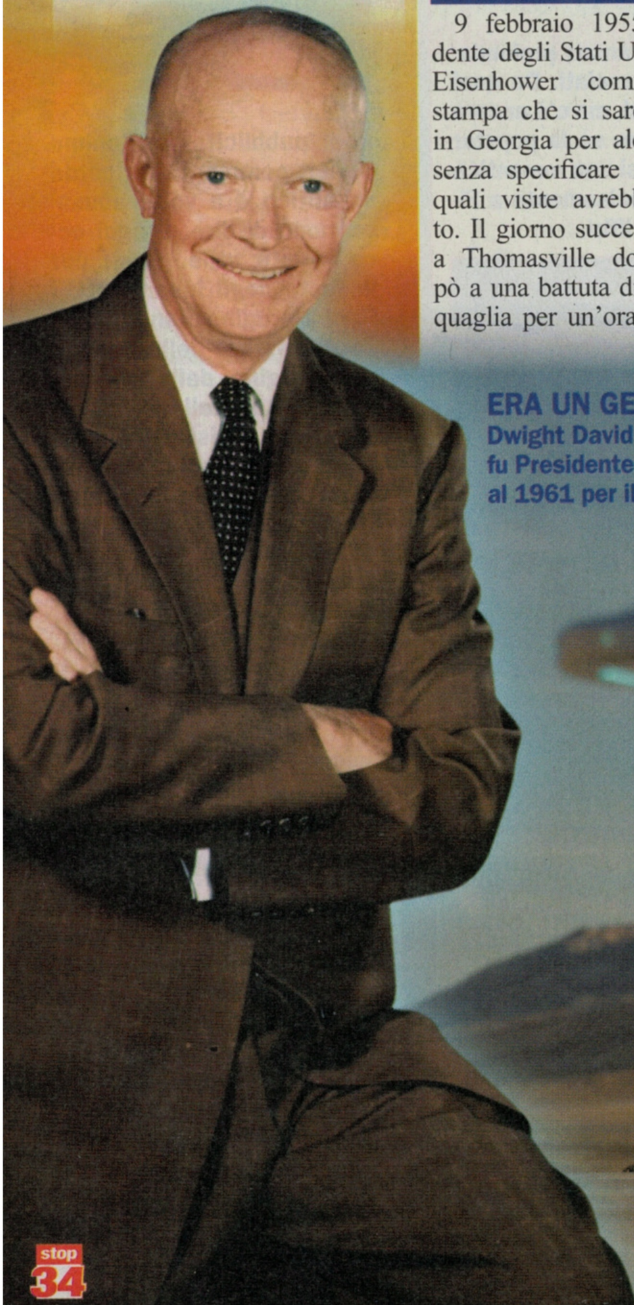
Un incontro che pare uscito da un libro di fantascienza, quello tra il presidente degli Stati Uniti Eisenhower e gli occupanti di un disco volante, presso la base aerea di Holloman, in Nuovo Messico. Realtà o leggenda?

La testimonianza di un pilota del posto

9 febbraio 1955, il presidente degli Stati Uniti Dwight Eisenhower comunicò alla stampa che si sarebbe recato in Georgia per alcuni giorni, senza specificare in dettaglio quali visite avrebbe compiuto. Il giorno successivo arrivò a Thomasville dove partecipò a una battuta di caccia alla quaglia per un'ora, ritirandosi poi in un cottage. Da questo momento fino al 12 febbraio non era prevista ufficialmente nessuna attività, né la stampa era al corrente degli spostamenti del Presidente in quelle ore.

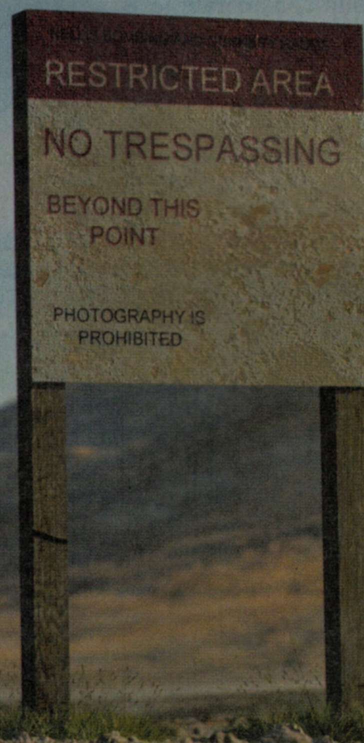
Testimonianza di quanto accaduto quel giorno ci giunge da William Kirklin, un pilota di stanza presso la base aerea di Holloman, il quale ha raccontato al ricercatore Art Campbell i dettagli della visita compiuta dal presidente Eisenhower alla base di Holloman.

Stando al resoconto di Kirklin, all'interno della base circolava già da giorni la voce di una prossima visita del Presidente, che avvenne realmente l'11 febbraio. L'Air Force

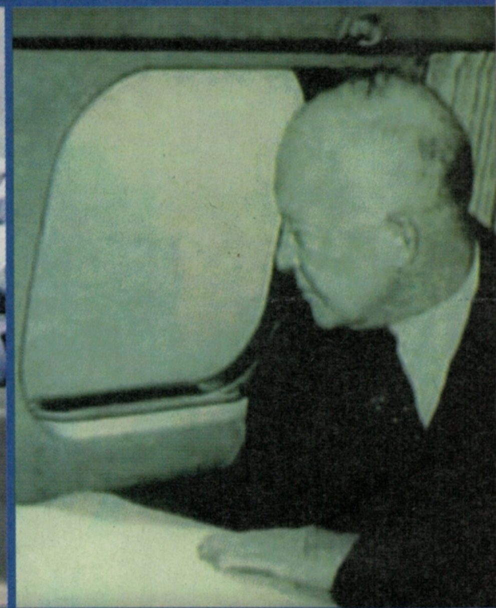


ERA UN GENERALE DELL'ESERCITO
Dwight David Eisenhower (1890-1969) fu Presidente degli Stati Uniti dal 1953 al 1961 per il partito repubblicano.









FACCIA A FACCIA

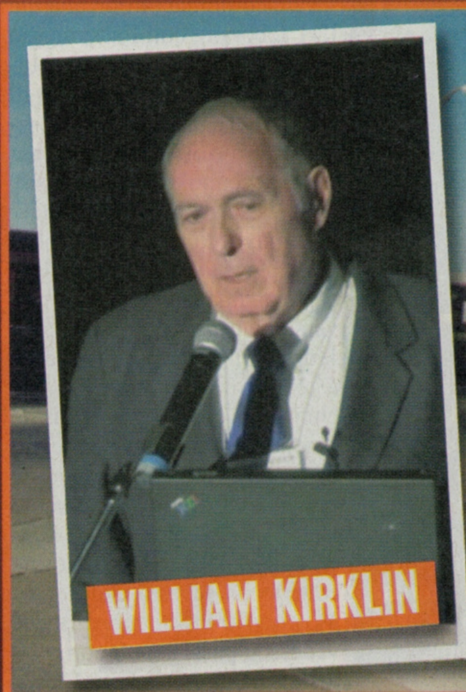
A fianco, un dvd racconta il presunto incontro tra il Presidente e gli alieni. Sopra, una ricostruzione di quanto sarebbe avvenuto in Georgia, con il disco volante che atterra sulla pista dove era arrivato da poco anche il numero uno della Casa Bianca, in visita ufficiale anche se non era atteso da nessun comitato.

One, l'aereo presidenziale, atterrò alle nove di mattina su una pista della base. Non vi era nessun comitato di accoglienza, nessuna banda musicale ad attenderlo. L'aereo semplicemente si fermò a metà pista. Dopo alcuni minuti, un oggetto metallico discoidale grande una decina di metri arrivò sopra la base, iniziando un volo stazionario per poi atterrare sulla pista. A quel punto, un uomo, si presume il Presidente stesso, scese dall'Air Force One e salì a bordo del disco, dove vi rimase per tre quarti d'ora. La torre di controllo ricevette due resoconti distinti relativi all'avvistamento in cielo di un oggetto volante non identificato simile a quello che si era fermato sulla pista.

Chi ha parlato era davvero credibile?

Kirklin sentì due ufficiali parlare tra loro mentre l'uno spiegava all'altro che avevano dovuto disattivare i radar perché interferivano con i sistemi di controllo del disco così come accaduto a Roswell alcuni anni prima, quando un disco volante cadde nel ranch di un allevatore della zona e l'Ufficio informazioni del Campo di Aviazione di Roswell diramò un comunicato ufficiale in cui si dava notizia dell'avvenuto reperimento di un disco volante. Nel pomeriggio dell'11 febbraio 1955, quando l'Air Force One era già decollato, William Kirklin parlò con il comandante Dorsey Moore che gli rivelò di aver visto anche lui un disco volante metallico su una pista di atterraggio. Di fronte a una vicenda di questo tipo occorre subito domandarsi se il testimone principale, William Kirklin possa essere credibile. Varie ricerche su di lui hanno portato a ritenere di sì, dal momento che, innanzitutto, risulta essere stato effettivamente di stanza alla base di Holloman in quei giorni. Inoltre, una volta andato in congedo, egli ha lavorato per numerose società connesse all'ambito della difesa, quali la Lockheed Missiles and Space, la NASA e la North American Aviation, distinguendosi sempre come persona stimata e affidabile. Altri testimoni sono emersi nel corso degli anni, aggiungendo ulteriore solidità al quadro mostrato dal resoconto di Kirklin. Nel 2007, Art Campbell ha intervistato una

continua a pag. 36





PAROLE CHE PESANO
Il testimone principale, William Kirklin, lavorò per la Difesa. Varie ricerche su di lui hanno portato a ritenere che risultò essere di stanza alla base di Holloman nei giorni della visita del Presidente.

Probabile che si trattasse di un prototipo molto avanzato, magari anche frutto di



L'INCONTRO? La ricostruzione del faccia a faccia tra il Presidente degli Stati Uniti e un alieno. Ma risulta molto difficile credere che il servizio di sicurezza dell'uomo più importante del mondo lo avrebbe lasciato salire da solo a bordo, senza fornirgli alcuna protezione.





TESTIMONE
Nel 2007, Art Campbell ha intervistato una signora che gli ha mostrato una lettera scritta anni prima dalla madre in cui riportava quanto visto da suo padre, un elettricista che lavorava alla base di Holloman. Il ricercatore aveva ascoltato da un pilota il racconto di quei giorni.

segue da pag. 35

signora che gli ha mostrato una lettera scritta anni prima dalla madre in cui riportava quanto visto da suo padre, un elettricista che lavorava alla base di Holloman.

La voce della visita circolava da un po'

Come sentito da William Kirklin, a inizio febbraio del 1955 circolava voce di una visita del presidente. Visita che venne compiuta effettivamente l'11 febbraio, con l'atterraggio dell'aereo presidenziale sulla pista. Con stupore suo e di alcuni altri tecnici, l'aereo rimase fermo vari minuti e, per vedere meglio, l'elettricista salì su un palo della luce. Arrivato in cima, notò che i suoi colleghi stavano indicando qualcosa in lontananza per poi correre verso un camion e allontanarsi. Stupito, l'elettricista ridiscese a terra e finalmente vide con chiarezza cosa aveva causato preoccupazione nei colleghi: un oggetto metallico di grandi dimensioni in avvicinamento alla pista. Subito pensò trattarsi di un qualche prototipo coperto da segreto che veniva mostrato al Presidente affinché vedesse i passi avanti compiuti dalla scienza aeronautica. Solo anni più tardi l'elettricista cambiò idea, leggendo resoconti di avvistamenti di Ufo che lo portarono a ritenere non potesse trattarsi di un velivolo terrestre data l'eccessiva superiorità tecnologica richiesta per tenere in aria un velivolo con una forma così poco adatta al volo. Un'ulteriore conferma della presenza di Eisenhower alla base di Holloman giunge dal resoconto del sergente Dave Wyckoff, che vide l'aereo del presidente l'11 febbraio 1955 e, alcune ore dopo, gli venne chiesto se voleva sentire un discorso che il Presidente avrebbe tenuto di lì a pochi minuti. Wyckoff accettò volentieri e



STOP N.6 7 febbraio 2017

vide di persona Eisenhower. I vari resoconti sembrano puntare concordemente in una direzione: l'11 febbraio 1955 il presidente Eisenhower si recò alla base aerea di Holloman ed entrò all'interno di un velivolo discoidale dove restò per circa 45 minuti. Su questi fatti vi è un livello di certezza elevato dal momento che le prove a supporto sono numerose e concordanti. Al contrario, in merito a chi vi fosse all'interno del disco non vi è certezza alcuna.

Difficile pensare che salì a bordo da solo

Se si fosse realmente trattato di extraterrestri, risulta molto difficile credere che il servizio di sicurezza del presidente lo avrebbe lasciato entrare da solo a bordo, senza fornirgli alcuna protezione. Inoltre non vi è nessuno che abbia visto chi fosse presente all'interno del disco. In virtù di queste considerazioni, ritenere che si sia trattato di un incontro con una delegazione extraterrestre è del tutto arbitrario e non fondato su prove. Molto più probabile che si trattasse effettivamente di un qualche prototipo molto avanzato, magari anche frutto di studi di retroingegneria compiuti su dischi volanti non terrestri caduti in precedenza (il caso Roswell, infatti, risalente al 1947, presenta una quantità di prove a supporto tali da renderlo altamente credibile) oppure nato dal reperimento di qualche velivolo avanzato tedesco recuperato nel 1945.

L'ipotesi prototipo, infatti, spiega meglio tutti gli aspetti singolari della vicenda, nella quale anche la storia di copertura della visita extraterrestre sarebbe servita a mascherare il vero motivo per cui Eisenhower si era recato in segretezza alla base di Holloman.. Così facendo, infatti, proprio la storia di copertura a base di Ufo ed extraterrestri non ha fatto altro che delegittimare l'intera vicenda, portando molti a ritenere, errando, che il presidente non si fosse nemmeno recato alla base.

Di conseguenza, finché non dovessero emergere prove che spingano verso uno scenario differente, l'episodio che vide protagonista il presidente Eisenhower l'11 febbraio 1955 va considerato come l'esame in prima persona di un prototipo avanzatissimo.

Proprio nell'ottica del livello tecnologico di questi prototipi occorre prestare particolare attenzione, dato che anche oggigiorno numerosi avvistamenti di presunti Ufo ben possono invece concernere l'avvistamento di velivoli terrestri dalle prestazioni avveniristiche.

Al contrario, quantomeno prima degli Anni '50 ciò non poteva avvenire, rendendo gli avvistamenti di quei periodi decisamente più credibili di quelli contemporanei.



DUE ANNI DOPO
Nel 1957, due anni dopo il presunto incontro del Presidente, un altro misterioso avvistamento si verificò nei cieli della base di Holloman.



ILLUSTRAZIONE DI PHILBY ILLUSTRATION

ESORDIENTI *Luciano Funetta: Dalle rovine (Tunuè); Ida Amlesù: Perdutamente (nottetempo)*

NUOVI AUTORI *In basso Paolo Piccirillo; Marta Zura-Puntaroni debutterà con minimum fax; Fabrizio Patriarca*

servato, oggi è un autore cult grazie a NN edizioni. La redazione di NN, in zona Porta Romana a Milano, è invasa dagli scatoloni con i gadget di Haruf. La publisher Eugenia Dubini racconta che lo scouting si fa attraverso le riviste online e le liste degli agenti letterari: «Non abbiamo scout veri e propri, siamo in otto, non possiamo permetterceli». A fine febbraio lanceranno Alessandro Garigliano: «Il testo ci è stato mandato da Giorgio Vasta. Spesso sono gli scrittori a darci i migliori consigli». Bisognerebbe fornire all'aspirante scrittore un manualetto delle istruzioni, come quello di Umberto Eco per le tesi di laurea. Primo passo: uscire dalla cameretta e scrivere sulle riviste. O tuttalpiù aprire un blog. Chi fa scouting guarda i premi, soprattutto il Calvino, e studia le riviste classiche come *Nuovi Argomenti*, *Nazione indiana*, *Minima & Moralia*, *Doppiozero* a quelle dai nomi fantasiosi come *Tina*, *Colla*, *Costola*, *Cadillac*, *Terranullius*, *Balena bianca*, *Watt* o *Effe*, coraggiosa antologia cartacea di racconti inediti illustrati. Tra i microeditori più interessanti ci sono Effequ di Grosseto, Il Maestrale di Nuoro (con cui ha esordito Salvatore Niffoi prima di Adelphi), i romani Elliot o Exòrma, Transeuropa di Massa. Nel libro di ricordi editoriali *I migliori anni della nostra vita* Ernesto Ferrero racconta che Italo Calvino cercava di leggere tutti i manoscritti. Si era dato tre regole per riconoscere un buon libro: «Se ha un linguaggio; se ha una struttura; se fa vedere qualcosa, possibilmente qualcosa di nuovo». Potremmo scriverle nell'ipotetico manualetto destinato ai "manoscrittai".

Churchill credeva negli alieni

Riemerge un articolo del 1939 in cui il futuro premier inglese espone le sue convinzioni

ELENA DUSI

La guerra sarebbe scoppiata a momenti. Ma la mente di Winston Churchill era concentrata ben oltre le sorti del mondo. «Siamo soli nell'universo?» si chiedeva il futuro premier britannico nel 1939 in un articolo destinato a un quotidiano di Londra. Per decenni quelle undici pagine battute a macchina sono rimaste sepolte nell'Us National Churchill Museum di Fulton, negli Stati Uniti. «È stata una sorpresa enorme quando il direttore del museo me le ha messe tra le mani», racconta il fisico americano Mario Livio su *Nature*.

Allo scienziato e divulgatore Usa il responsabile del Churchill Museum Timothy Riley chiedeva soprattutto un parere scientifico. Quanto solide erano le conoscenze di astrofisica e biologia dello statista britannico? Che credenziali aveva per dire la sua in un campo che all'epoca viveva più di aneddoti e fantascienza che non di ricerche e osservazioni? Quella di Mario Livio per Churchill è una promozione con lode. «In un'epoca come quella odierna in cui i politici preferiscono scansare la scienza, è emozionante ritrovare un leader che vi si impegnava in profondità».

«Il Sole è semplicemente una stella come migliaia di milioni di altre stelle dell'universo. Perché non potrebbero esserci altri sistemi planetari attorno a esse?», spiega per esempio Churchill, anticipando le osservazioni che il satellite della Nasa Keplero avrebbe fatto settant'anni più tardi (oggi i cosiddetti esopianeti identificati nell'universo sono alcune migliaia). «Non sono così presuntuoso da credere che il mio Sole sia l'unico ad avere dei pianeti che gli orbitano attorno», prosegue Churchill. Alcuni di questi pianeti «potrebbero avere le giuste dimensioni per mantenere sulla superficie acqua allo stato liquido, e magari anche un'atmosfera». Tutto sta «che si trovino alla giusta distanza dalla loro stella madre, per mantenere una temperatura adeguata». Come sarà confermato più tardi, Marte e Venere sono i migliori candidati del Sistema Solare per cercare altre forme di vita, sosteneva Churchill. Che prevedeva: «Un giorno, forse in un futuro nemmeno troppo lontano, diventerà possibile viaggiare fino alla Luna, o magari fino a Venere e Marte». Ma viste le distanze fra noi e il resto dell'universo, è possibile che non arriveremo mai a sapere se altri pianeti «ospitano creature viventi, o addirittura piante».



IL RITRATTO *Winston Churchill (1874-1965)*

Alla possibilità di vita extraterrestre lo statista britannico credeva con convinzione. E non solo perché influenzato dalla *Guerra dei Mondi*, andata in onda l'anno precedente. O perché non molti decenni prima, l'astronomo italiano Giovanni Schiaparelli aveva annunciato di aver osservato i famosi canali su Marte. La convinzione di Churchill aveva basi morali, oltre che scientifiche: basi amare, ma non c'è da stupirsi, visto lo spirito dei tempi. «Io, per mio conto, non sono poi così impressionato dai successi ottenuti qui dalla nostra civiltà da pensare che siamo l'unico punto di questo immenso universo a contenere creature viventi e pensanti. O che noi rappresentiamo il culmine dello sviluppo fisico e mentale nel vasto orizzonte del tempo e dello spazio».

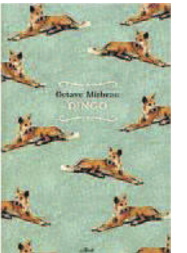
Nel 2010, in un gruppo di documenti declassificati dal Ministero della Difesa britannico (i cosiddetti "Ufo files"), uscì anche il resoconto di un fisico dell'università di Leicester. Suo nonno era stato guardia del corpo di Churchill e in tempo di guerra gli capitò di ascoltare una conversazione con il generale Eisenhower. I due leader lessero con preoccupazione il rapporto di un pilota della Raf che, tornando da un bombardamento, riferì di essere stato affiancato da un disco volante, abilissimo nelle manovre ma dall'aspetto sostanzialmente pacifico. Memori delle reazioni di panico della *Guerra dei Mondi*, i due leader decisero di classificare quel rapporto come top secret per 50 anni. Gli alieni esisteranno pure, dovette aver pensato Churchill, ma è meglio che non si sappia troppo in giro.

Autobiografia firmata con le zampe

Torna "Dingo" dove Octave Mirbeau, morto cent'anni fa, si raccontava attraverso il cane

DARIA GALATERIA

Octave Mirbeau – l'autore del piccante *Diario di una cameriera*, portato al cinema da Renoir e Buñuel – aveva sposato una grande cocotte. Invitato a cena, il pettegolo diarista Goncourt scopre che la signora, che ha "i gentili resti" della graziosissima donna che tutta Parigi ha conosciuto, è una cuoca squisita. Ma, riaccompagnando l'amico, Mirbeau si racconta; lamenta di esser stato tradito "crudelmente", e di aver tutto dilapidato per la donna: da sottoprefetto e in Borsa, dove guadagnava 12.000 franchi al mese. Poi per gelosia si era trasferito con la signora in Bretagna e poi a Levallois-Perret, una specie di campagna circondata da industrie (maligna Goncourt). Ma la verità è forse un'altra, e Mirbeau la rivela in un altro dei suoi capolavori, *Dingo* (elliott, nella traduzione di Decio Cinti). Dingo è il nome di un suo canide – i dingo vivono selvaggi in Australia, facendo stragi di pecore, buoi e marsupiali: anche grossi, anche trecento, per allegria ("come gli uomini", commenta Mirbeau, che di sadismo ha parlato, deliziosamente, nel *Giardino dei supplizi*). Dingo gli è stato inviato, cucciolo, da un amico viaggiatore; e Mirbeau non tarda a provare simpatia per quell'animale indipendente e indignato che cerca di poppargli le punte delle pantofole e che gli assomiglia. Dingo infatti adora i poveri e le signore leggere – Mirbeau pensa che sia per via degli odori forti; di sé lo scrittore non dice, ma, se possiamo integrare, Mirbeau era un fervente delle signore perdute e delle cause perse: come la difesa dell'ebreo Dreyfus (fu lui a pagare il processo a Zola, che si rovinò per scagionarlo), della scultrice Camille Claudel, perseguitata dal fratello il poeta diplomatico Paul, e poi le idee radicali, i pittori d'avanguardia e tutte le altre battaglie che abbracciava, da giornalista pagato, per l'appunto, profumatamente.



IL LIBRO *Dingo di Octave Mirbeau (elliot, trad. di Decio Cinti, pagg. 448 euro 22 con illustrazioni di Pierre Bonnard)*

Il romanzo è quindi il racconto di Dingo alle prese con un paesotto di campagna dell'Occidente civilizzato, pieno di contadini diffidenti come in Maupassant, e di galline, pecore, tacchini, maialini d'India e altre tentazioni che trasformano ogni tanto il suo feroce riserbo in frenente efferatezza; e diventa, di necessità, anche un'autobiografia dal punto di vista di un cane – così come, sette anni prima, con *La 628-E8*, Mirbeau aveva scritto di viaggi come storia della sua auto. Sfilano, indimenticabili, il notaio, il sindaco col sorriso elettorale, mocciosi, ubriaconi e contadini. Ma il capolavoro di una scrittura che accoppia la grazia dell'umorismo inglese alla sottigliezza francese è il rapporto di Dingo con i cani indigeni. «Ah, voi sorvegliate le pecore? Davvero?» si stupisce Dingo, che le pecore, lui, le sgozza, e trova servile e repressivo il loro mestiere di sorveglianti delle bestie, al servizio dei padroni uomini.

Scacciato dal paese a seguito delle razzie di Dingo, Mirbeau tenta un soggiorno parigino, nell'elegante quartiere che fu in effetti il suo. Ma Dingo riesce a scovare anche a Parigi bestie da macello e perfino canguri; e comunque la città lo rende definitivamente triste. Ecco quindi Mirbeau, con moglie e Miscia (gatta più civetta che in Colette) traslocare in campagna. Mirbeau scrive Dingo nel 1913; è ammalato, e tocca al suo amico Léon Werth concludere la storia. Léon Werth è lo scrittore cui Saint-Exupéry dedica *Il piccolo principe*; anche quella, come Dingo, una storia degli uomini vista all'incontrario.

Effetti di una rivoluzione

Gli altri ci aiutano a vedere Gesù

di Alberto Fabio Ambrosio

Forse è passato un poco inosservato un libro che merita invece attenzione. Marinella Perroni, docente di Nuovo Testamento nonché già presidente del Coordinamento teologhe italiane, ha raccolto una serie di contributi riguardanti il *Gesù degli "Altri"* (Brescia, Morcelliana, Morcelliana, 2016, pagine 160, euro 15) È certamente "rivoluzionario" cercare in casa d'altri quanto si può conoscere stando nel proprio campo. Eppure è questa uscita, questa grande "rivoluzione" che permette di riscoprire quanto Gesù sia importante per il cristiano. La curatrice del volume lo afferma senza indugi nell'introduzione che è un sicuro inizio di una cristologia "altra": «La ricerca storica ci ha insegnato che si può, a volte perfino si deve, uscire dalla prospettiva di fede per capire di più e meglio. Ma si tratta di una sospensione, non di una rinuncia» (pagina 7). Parole forti che condivido pienamente tanto per impegno intellettuale che per esperienza di vita. Senza addentrarci in un approfondimento critico, il libro che contiene cinque contributi, si presta a un'ispirazione per ulteriori riflessioni teologiche e metodologiche. Così, dopo la chiara introduzione della curatrice, Piero Stefani mette bene in luce il perché di un certo silenzio o addirittura di un'ostilità aperta nei testi talmudici riguardanti Gesù. Non bisogna mai dimenticare che un certo atteggiamento cristiano non è stato all'altezza dell'insegnamento dell'ebreo Gesù, anzi talvolta la pratica è stata contraria ai suoi principi. Gesù così come è descritto nei testi talmudici deve far riflettere sulla trasmissione della fede che non è solo un fatto cerebrale e intellettuale. I contributi di Ignazio de Franceschi dedicato al Gesù dell'islam nascente quanto a quello di Alberto Ventura tutto rivolto al Gesù del sufismo sfiorano la scottante problematica dell'identità di *'Isâ*-Gesù, soprattutto quando si sa che nel nome stesso (*'Isâ*) è contenuta un'ambiguità linguistica di non poco conto. Afferma Alberto Ventura: «Tutto ciò che abbiamo detto ci dimostra in conclusione che i fedeli dell'islam non si sentono affatto "altri" rispetto alla figura del Cristo, perché considerano il loro Gesù come quello autentico e originale. Il "Gesù degli altri", semmai, è per loro paradossalmente proprio quello dei cristiani» (pagina 119). Tanti sarebbero ancora i riferimenti a Gesù e a Maria nell'islam non solo di lingua araba, ma forse e soprattutto in lingua persiana e turca, come una lettera a Gesù scritta da un autore ottomano per lamentarsi dell'occupazione della capitale ottomana da parte delle truppe alleate considerate cristiane; o ancora di un inno di Maria opera di un autore turco del XII secolo, dedicato a un dialogo tra Maria e Gesù. Si impone quindi un'uscita dalle proprie convinzioni, dalle proprie pretese di possedere tutto del tutto che è Cristo. Sembra strano, anzi un po' fantasioso, ma è proprio questa la prospettiva di Perroni che va sposata interamente, oggi, in una congiuntura geopolitica che rischia non solo di alzare palizzate, ma di creare ideologie politiche potenzialmente distruttive del nucleo sano di tutte le religioni. Questo processo è già stato celebrato in altri tempi come ci ricorda l'articolo — per molti versi inatteso — su un Gesù "induista" a cura di Sergio Manna. Gli induisti hanno conosciuto la figura di Gesù attraverso l'attività missionaria soprattutto protestante, ma talvolta gli atteggiamenti concreti dei colonialisti erano tutt'altro che riassumibili nei principi evangelici. Il famoso Swami Vivekananda (m. 1902), che introdusse in Occidente l'induismo, così parlava ai cristiani: «Lasciate che ve lo dica, fratelli. Se volete vivere tornate a Cristo. Voi non siete cristiani. No, come nazione non lo siete. Tornate a Cristo. Tornate a colui che non aveva dove posare la sua testa. Gli uccelli hanno i loro nidi... Se questa nazione vuole vivere ritorni a lui. Non potete servire Dio e mammona allo stesso tempo» (pagina 131). Il miracolo si compie allora quando, rileggendo il Gesù degli "altri", si scopre che la loro percezione rivela quanto per noi è essenziale e, a quel punto, "gli altri" possono davvero ricordarci, richiamarci, stimolarci a diventare sempre più veri discepoli del Cristo Salvatore.

La ricerca storica ci ha insegnato che si può e a volte perfino si deve uscire dalla prospettiva di fede per capire di più e meglio



Gesù risorto in un murale che decora la cappella del Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth di Pune

Churchill e i misteri dell'universo

Stava perfezionando i dettagli dell'impresa più importante della sua vita, l'attacco della Gran Bretagna contro la Germania di Hitler, eppure Winston Churchill aveva anche altro per la testa, un interrogativo che da tempo quasi lo tormentava: c'è una vita extraterrestre? Questa domanda è al centro di un suo scritto inedito emerso, nei giorni scorsi, dal National Churchill Museum di Fulton, nello Stato del Missouri, località dove tenne, nel 1946, al termine della guerra, il celebre discorso passato alla storia come l'«Iron Curtain speech». Datato 1939, il testo (di undici pagine) intitolato «Are We alone in The Universe?», mai pubblicato, era stato ceduto al museo statunitense negli anni Ottanta da Wendy Reves, la moglie dell'editore delle opere di Churchill. Dimenticato lì per anni, il testo — più volte rivisto e corretto dallo statista — è stato recentemente rispolverato da Timothy Riley, dall'anno scorso direttore del Churchill Museum, che ha poi contattato l'astrofisico e divulgatore scientifico israeliano Mario Livio, perché lo esaminasse. In un articolo sulla rivista «Nature», Livio, nell'evidenziare l'importanza e l'interesse rivestiti da questo inedito, sottolinea: «Churchill pensa come un astrofisico di oggi». Il due volte primo ministro britannico, nonché premio Nobel per la letteratura (1953), nel tessere un intrico di ragionamenti sull'universo e sui suoi misteri, annota: «Perché non potrebbero esistere altri sistemi planetari?». E sulla base di questo interrogativo analizza le condizioni principali perché in un «altrove ignoto» si sviluppi «la capacità di riprodursi e moltiplicarsi», e arriva a individuare in Marte e in Venere gli unici pianeti del sistema solare capaci di ospitare la vita. In quel drammatico 1939, quando si stavano addensando le nubi del secondo conflitto mondiale, lo statista era come pervaso dal bisogno di immaginare zone immuni — anche scenari interstellari — dalla follia della guerra. E così scriveva: «Non sono poi così convinto che noi rappresentiamo il culmine dello sviluppo nel vasto orizzonte del tempo e dello spazio». Da rilevare che all'epoca era assai vivo il dibattito scientifico, e fantascientifico, sulla possibile esistenza di altri mondi. Basti pensare che nel 1938, ovvero un anno prima della stesura dell'articolo di Churchill, la Cbs negli Stati Uniti aveva trasmesso lo sceneggiato radiofonico di Orson Welles, «La guerra dei mondi», tratto dall'omonimo romanzo di Herbert George Wells, in cui raccontava di un eccezionale sbarco di extraterrestri in territorio americano. Molti degli ascoltatori ci credettero: e fu subito panico. (*gabriele nicolò*)



Kcho, installazione in occasione della mostra «Extrano dia en la playa» (2014)

In due saggi pubblicati su «Le Débat»

I migranti dividono l'Europa

di Charles de Pechpeyrou

L'ingenuità e l'impreparazione dell'Europa di fronte a un fenomeno così vasto e complesso quanto la grande migrazione intercontinentale iniziata nel 2015 dall'Africa e dall'Asia rappresenta un caso da manuale di accecamento storico, cioè di un fenomeno "catastrofico" — nel senso etimologico di un rovesciamento radicale — di cui rifiutiamo di calcolarne le conseguenze? È il quesito che pone Raffaele Simone, professore ordinario di linguistica all'università Roma Tre, in un articolo pubblicato nel numero invernale della rivista francese «Le Débat».

Inedita per le sue dimensioni — non si tratta di migliaia ma di milioni di persone spinte dalla miseria, dalle guerre e dalle devastazioni — e per il fatto che segue strade ben definite, sia in Africa che in Asia, nota l'autore, la grande migrazione in atto si sta dirigendo verso quel continente "dolce", almeno nella sua parte occidentale, che ha fatto dell'accoglienza — universale, gratuita, pacifica — la sua linea-guida. Secondo Raffaele Simone, questo spirito di ospitalità nasce tra l'altro «da un sentimento di colpevolezza e da un tentativo di risarcire in termini giuridici e politici il debito storico rappresentato dalle atrocità del secolo precedente, guerre mondiali e colonialismo».

Pur avendo già conosciuto durante il ventesimo secolo varie ondate d'immigrazione, l'Europa, rimprovera il linguista, non è stata in grado di «elaborare piani solidi e concertati per prepararsi» che avrebbero dovuto essere un freno, una guida o almeno un orientamento a questo fenomeno. Due sono gli unici dispositivi usati finora dall'Unione europea: i trattati di Schengen e di Dublino da una parte, e dall'altra «una distinzione ambigua tra rifugiato, che fugge l'oppressione politica e può entrare, e migrante economico, che fugge la miseria e non può entrare».

In breve, l'Europa ha risposto alla grande migrazione in ritardo e senza organizzazione, riuscendo solo alla fine del 2015 a stabilire la ripartizione dei flussi nei vari paesi secondo quote obbligatorie. Sappiamo che non tutti i Paesi hanno aderito.

Questa ospitalità disordinata, denuncia il ricercatore, ha avuto tanti effetti dal punto di vista politico, economico, gestionale, da cui un effetto negativo sull'opinione pubblica, tanto che «di fronte ai flussi migratori, la maggioranza degli elettori è preoccupata, contraria, o addirittura ostile». Perciò l'integrazione dei migranti nella società si rivela una vera sfida, che necessita tra l'altro di analizzare il profilo dei migranti. «In gran parte sono uomini giovani provenienti da paesi estremamente poveri dell'Africa nera, con un livello di istruzione bassissimo, abituati a regimi violenti, estranei alle tradizioni europee», ricorda l'autore. Inoltre, il flusso di migranti provenienti sia dall'Africa che dal Medio oriente è di cultura musulmana, «una fatto di cui la classe politica non sembra affatto preoccupata». Invece, spiega Raffaele Simone, «sembra molto difficile il processo di familiarizzazione e di integrazione in una cultura cristiana, laica e democratica, da parte di masse musulmane con un basso livello di istruzione».

Inoltre, spiega il docente, la grande migrazione ha risvegliato gli egoismi nazionali e ha provocato un dissenso tra i paesi dell'Unione europea, che devono far fronte ai movimenti di estrema destra. I diversi paesi non agiscono all'unisono, per esempio per quanto riguarda la politica delle quote. Oggi, dai Balcani alla Polonia, delle barriere di filo spinato corrono lungo tutta l'Europa centrale. E per di più la crisi dei rifugiati ha riaperto la breccia tra Est e Ovest, come sostiene, nello stesso numero di «Le Débat», Ivan Krastev, *permanent fellow* all'Istituto delle scienze umane di Vienna e presidente del Centro per le strategie liberali a Sofia.

«Perché, oggi, gli europei dell'Est sono così lontani dai valori fondamentali propri all'Unione europea ed evitano di mostrarsi solidali con le sofferenze altrui?», si chiede il ricercatore. In effetti, nota Ivan Krastev, la popolazione dell'Europa orientale rimane impassibile di fronte alla tragedia dei rifugiati, e nello stesso tempo i suoi dirigenti criticano la decisione di Bruxelles di spartire i rifugiati tra i vari paesi dell'Unione europea. In Europa centrale e orientale, la crisi ha unito delle società che altrimenti sarebbero frammentate, in un'ostilità quasi unanime contro i rifugiati.

Il rancore centro-europeo verso i migranti è paradossale, sottolinea del resto l'autore, tenendo conto di due elementi. Il primo: nella maggior parte del ventesimo secolo, proprio l'Europa centrale e orientale era una regione dove gli abitanti hanno dovuto sperimentare la realtà dell'emigrazione. Secondo, in questo momento, nella maggior parte di questi paesi, pochissimi rifugiati sono presenti. Nel 2015, per esempio, il numero di rifugiati entrati in Slovacchia era di 169, di cui solo 8 chiedevano di rimanere. Del resto, la diffidenza riguarda soprattutto eventuali migranti musulmani. All'inizio del 2016, il premier slovacco Robert Fico aveva dichiarato di voler accettare solo cristiani, al fine di impedire la creazione di una comunità musulmana nel paese, sostenendo che non ci sono moschee.

Il ritorno della divisione est-ovest in Europa «non è né un incidente né un effetto della sfortuna, trae le sue radici nella storia, la demografia e le difficoltà legate alla transizione post-comunista», afferma Ivan Krastev. Rappresenta anche una versione centro-europea della ribellione popolare contro la globalizzazione. Più di ogni altra regione d'Europa, rileva l'autore, l'Europa centrale conosce sia i vantaggi sia i lati oscuri del multiculturalismo. Pertanto, secondo lui, «la permalosità dell'Europa centrale rispetto alla crisi dei rifugiati si può spiegare, in parte, da questa diffidenza storica verso tutto ciò che è cosmopolita, così come dal legame tra comunismo e internazionalismo».

Se, da un lato, il tema dell'immigrazione è stato sfruttato abilmente a fini elettorali dall'estrema destra in vari paesi europei — Svizzera, Austria, Germania, Polonia e Gran Bretagna — «paradossalmente — mette in guardia Ivan Krastev — nella crisi dei rifugiati nell'Unione europea, la convergenza di sentimenti anti-immigrati non porterà a un riavvicinamento tra Europa occidentale e centrale». Al contrario, conclude l'autore, non fa altro che separarle sempre di più.

Inedito per le sue dimensioni il fenomeno interessa il continente che ha fatto dell'accoglienza la sua linea guida



Kcho, «Senza titolo» (2006)

STATI UNITI

Il Pentagono lancia la task force sugli Ufo "Cambiamo mentalità"

L'annuncio Usa dopo il rapporto di giugno sugli avvistamenti

dal nostro corrispondente
Paolo Mastrolilli

NEW YORK – Adesso è ufficiale: gli Ufo escono dalla fantascienza, per entrare nella realtà dei teatri militari presidiati dal Pentagono. Martedì il ministero della Difesa americano ha costituito l'*Airborne Object Identification and Management Synchronization Group*, ossia la task force incaricata di studiare gli oggetti volanti non identificati. La teoria prevalente resta che si tratti di fenomeni terreni o naturali, e non di omini verdi venuti da galassie lontane per colonizzarci. Però la decisione di creare un gruppo specifico di studio conferma quanto meno la necessità di prendere sul serio la questione.

Da decenni gli amanti delle teorie cospirative accusano il governo di nascondere le verità che conosce sugli extraterrestri, a partire dal presunto disco volante precipitato l'8 luglio del 1947 sul Roswell Army Air Field del New Mexico. Tra gli appassionati del genere però non ci sono solo lunatici, ma anche persone serissime come l'ex capo di gabinetto della Casa Bianca John Podesta. Nel maggio del 2019 erano stati pubblicati video sorprendenti, ripresi nel novembre del 2004 e nel gennaio del 2015, e identificati in codice come "Flirl", "Gimbal" e "GoFast". Li avevano registrati i piloti degli F/A – 18 Super Hornets della Navy, che non erano riusciti a trattenere lo stupore: «Wow, che roba è quella?!». Il tenente Ryan Graves, uno degli avvistatori, era andato in Congresso a raccontare la sua meraviglia: «Riuscivano a stare in aria tutto il giorno, non so come facessero». Alla fine si era creata una pressione sufficiente per costringere gli apparati dello stato a chiarire, e il 25 giugno scorso il Director of National Intelligence aveva pubblicato un rapporto di nove pagine, per spiegare al pubblico quanto poteva sugli *unidentified aerial phenomena*. Il documento citava 144 avvistamenti, di cui 80 con sensori multipli, avvenuti tra il 2004 e il 2021. Di questi solo uno era stato spiegato: si trattava un pallone aerostatico. In 18 incidenti erano state notate «rotte inusuali», tra cui oggetti che «restavano immobili nel vento, o compivano manovre improvvise, a velocità considerevole, senza alcun mezzo di propulsione discernibile».

Il rapporto aveva ammesso di non avere spiegazioni per questi fenomeni, ma li aveva raggruppati in cinque categorie: oggetti tipo detriti aerei; fenomeni atmosferici; programmi segreti governativi o dell'industria privata; sistemi di forze straniere avversarie, come Cina o Russia; altro, ossia qualunque cosa che potrebbe includere anche gli alieni. «Spero che la mentalità riguardo agli Ufo – aveva notato soddisfatto



▲ Un avvistamento segnalato

Podesta – sia cambiata».

Il rapporto però aveva generato più dubbi che certezze, e così martedì la vice segretaria alla Difesa Kathleen Hicks ha emesso l'ordine per creare la nuova task force. Secondo la direttrice dell'intelligence Haines le probabilità di scoprire gli omini verdi restano basse, ma potrebbe trattarsi di sistemi d'arma sviluppati da avversari o detriti che minacciano la sicurezza dei voli commerciali. Perciò bisognerà indagare sugli Ufo.

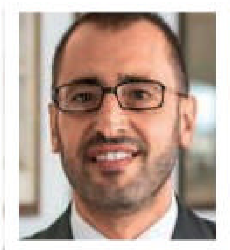
Il caso

Rifugiata a Roma la "Bambina afghana" di McCurry



US/ANSA ANSA

Sharbat Gula, la bambina afghana con occhi verdi che nel 1985 - grazie a una famosa foto scattata da Steve McCurry per il *National Geographic* in un campo profughi di Peshawar, in Pakistan - divenne l'immagine del dramma dei rifugiati, è fuggita a Roma. Raccogliendo il suo appello, "la presidenza del Consiglio ne ha organizzato il trasferimento in Italia nel contesto del programma di evacuazione dei cittadini afghani".



Risponde
ANTONIO VILLAFRANCA
direttore ricerche Istituto studi politica internazionale Ispi



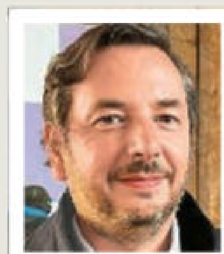
PERCHÉ È COSÌ IMPORTANTE IL TRATTATO DEL QUIRINALE STIPULATO TRA ITALIA E FRANCIA?

L'accordo, firmato il 27 novembre, rinsalda i rapporti tra i due Paesi. In quali ambiti verrà applicato principalmente?

È vero che i dissapori tra Italia e Francia su questione economiche, in politica estera o per la gestione dei migranti hanno sempre fatto notizia, ma detto questo i due Paesi hanno da sempre una relazione proficua: i cugini d'Oltralpe sono i nostri secondi partner commerciali. Il trattato quindi si inserisce in rapporti già strettissimi e rappresenta comunque un salto di qualità. Innanzitutto si stabilisce una maggiore vicinanza istituzionale con incontri periodici su tutti i dossier. Lo scopo è quello di attuare una sorta di *early warning*, pre-allarme, per evitare scontri più importanti. Vengono poi stabilite maggiori cooperazioni in aree sensibili come Spazio e Difesa, nelle quali anche per l'Italia, può essere fondamentale avere come referente Parigi. Restano comunque altre aree di possibile attrito, una su tutte la gestione dei migranti. In queste settimane corre il decimo anniversario della crisi al confine di Ventimiglia: non si parla ancora di redistribuzione delle persone, ma la questione si sta ponendo. (*Nella foto, il presidente Mattarella e il collega francese Macron*).

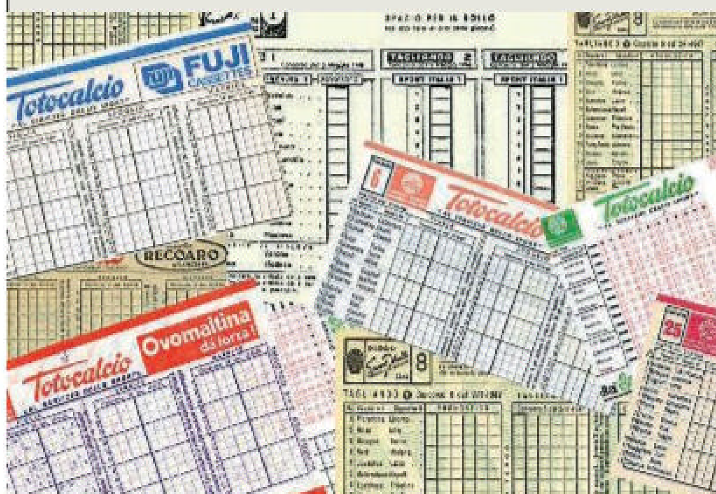
L'ANNO PROSSIMO DAREMO L'ADDIO AL "13" DEL TOTOCALCIO?

Dopo 71 anni, l'Agenzia delle Accise, Dogane e Monopoli ha deciso di rivoluzionare la classica schedina per rilanciarla. Come si potrà giocare?



Risponde
FABRIZIO FIORENTINO
dirigente Ufficio scommesse, Agenzia delle Accise, Dogane e Monopoli

Non diremo addio alla schedina. Il rinnovato concorso – che inizierà l'8 e il 9 gennaio 2022 – prevede una formula con diverse modalità di gioco mantenendo la scelta tra 1,X,2 e il 13 come risultato che dà diritto al premio più ricco. Ma ci saranno altre possibilità di scommessa e ognuna avrà il suo montepremi. Il gioco sarà diviso in due pannelli: nel primo, da otto eventi, detti obbligatori, il giocatore, dovrà esprimere i pronostici per due, tre, quattro, sei, sette oppure otto partite nell'ordine in cui sono presentate; nel secondo – da sette a dodici eventi, detti opzionali – il giocatore potrà scegliere a piacere quelli sui quali esprimere il pronostico. Le partite saranno selezionate tra quelle in programma nei più importanti campionati di calcio, privilegiando la Serie A italiana, e ordinati in base all'incertezza dell'esito finale (le partite più incerte saranno inserite tra gli eventi obbligatori). Per fare 13 sarà necessario centrare il pronostico di tutti gli otto eventi obbligatori più altri cinque del secondo pannello.



a cura di **Francesco Gironi**



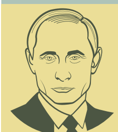
Risponde
DANILO IOSZ
presidente Federazione ufologica italiana

GLI STATI UNITI RIUSCIRANNO A PROVARE L'ESISTENZA DEGLI UFO?

Il governo ha avviato una nuova indagine sugli Ufo: alcuni filmati raccolti dalla Marina proverebbero l'esistenza di oggetti non identificati. Si porrà la parola fine?

Da una persona come me non ci si può attendere una risposta che possa mettere in dubbio l'esistenza degli Ufo. Voglio però sottolineare come la parola Ufo, il cui acronimo significa oggetti volanti non identificati, non sia sinonimo di alieni. La creazione del nuovo ufficio che andrà a verificare i documenti di questi anni è importante, soprattutto perché arriva dagli Stati Uniti, il Paese che detiene il segreto di Roswell (*il 2 luglio 1947 un oggetto volante non identificato precipitò nella cittadina del Nuovo Messico*, ndr) e che per anni ha fatto muro di gomma, non dando spiegazioni. Dopo i recenti filmati divulgati dalla Marina americana, non si è potuto negare l'evidenza: quegli oggetti non erano identificabili. Quanto al fatto che si possa arrivare alla parola fine, sono scettico: molti file sono segreti e tali resteranno. (*Sotto, la foto che proverebbe l'avvistamento di un Ufo negli Anni 60*).





ESTERI_
Mosca e la partita dell'est

IDEE_
Perché gli Ufo interessano il Pentagono



ISSN 1824-9914
10176
ISBN 978-88-498-7139-5

Rivista Mensile

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gen 2022 - 8 euro

formiche

n°176

INFLAZIONE

La grande minaccia

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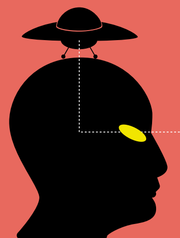
RUBBETTINO

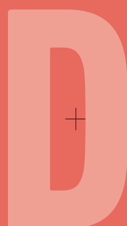
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formiche rivista mensile, 8 euro, gennaio 2022
Numero chiuso in redazione il 21 dicembre 2021 - Finito di stampare il 23 dicembre 2021










IDEE



Il ritorno degli Ufo

Uap, lungi dall'essere straordinari

*di Luciano Anselmo**

Non è affatto detto che dietro un evento inspiegabile ci sia necessariamente qualcosa di strano, se quel che ci accade non riusciamo a chiarirlo è perché magari ci mancano solo le informazioni, il tempo o le competenze per farlo. Secondo il rapporto dell'Intelligence Usa, questo vale per una buona parte degli Uap analizzati. In alcuni casi sono stati osservati quelli che sembrano oggetti apparentemente privi di motori, in grado però di rimanere sospesi a mezz'aria e di raggiungere velocità considerevoli. Comprensibile quindi la preoccupazione dei militari americani. Ritengo, tuttavia, che possano dormire sonni tranquilli

È difficile trovare ciò che non si cerca, mentre non è raro che si creda di vedere quello che si sta cercando anche quando, di fatto, così non è. Non sorprende, quindi, che l'avvistamento di Oggetti volanti non identificati, Ufo, sia diventato un fenomeno di massa solo dopo il secondo conflitto mondiale, cioè da quando razzi e aerei supersonici, seguiti poi da satelliti e astronavi, hanno cominciato a popolare l'esperienza diretta di molti e l'immaginazione di tutti.
Trascorsi ormai tre quarti di secolo da quando il fenomeno si è imposto all'attenzione del grande pubblico, è ovvio chiedersi a che punto siamo sulla sua interpretazione. Escludendo dalle migliaia di segnalazioni le fabbricazioni fraudolente e le bufale, la quasi totalità degli avvistamenti può essere spiegata con un ventaglio di cause che generalmente coinvolgono aerei, razzi, palloni sonda e stratosferici, velivoli sperimentali, satelliti, meteore, corpi celesti e fenomeni caratteristici dell'alta atmosfera, su cui sappiamo ancora poco. Tuttavia, anche dopo questa cernita meticolosa, un piccolo numero di casi resiste a qualunque semplice spiegazione. È quanto emerge pure nell'ultimo rapporto ufficiale sull'argomento, rilasciato il 25 giugno 2021 dall'Intelligence statunitense su specifica richiesta del Congresso.
Oltre a utilizzare il più neutrale Uap (cioè "fenomeni aerei non identificati") al posto del venerando, ma ben più impegnativo, acronimo Ufo, il rapporto si concentra su segnalazioni, ottenute tra il 2004 e il 2021, caratterizzate da un livello minimo di qualità e di affidabilità, essendo spesso basate su dati registrati da più di uno strumento.
Non è affatto detto che dietro un evento inspiegabile ci sia necessariamente qualcosa di strano, come ciascuno di noi sperimenta ogni giorno, per esempio interagendo con Pc e altri dispositivi elettronici. Se quel che ci accade non riusciamo a spiegarlo è perché magari ci mancano solo le informazioni, il tempo o le competenze per farlo. Secondo il rapporto dell'Intelligence Usa, lo stesso vale probabilmente per una buona parte degli Uap analizzati, soprattutto per la scarsità dei dati disponibili. Ma in diciotto casi diversi sono stati osservati quelli che sembrano oggetti privi apparentemente di motori, in grado però di rimanere sospesi a mezz'aria, di cambiare direzione all'improvviso, di accelerare repentinamente e di raggiungere velocità considerevoli. Comprensibile quindi la

"L'astronomo Carl Sagan amava ripetere che affermazioni straordinarie richiedono prove straordinarie. L'evidenza finora disponibile a sostegno delle spiegazioni più stupefacenti di Ufo o Uap è però ben lungi dall'essere straordinaria"



preoccupazione dei militari americani che, escludendo un loro coinvolgimento in proposito, dovrebbero prendere in considerazione la scomoda idea che russi e cinesi siano molto più avanti di quanto si creda, facendo vacillare gli equilibri strategici. Ritengo, tuttavia, che possano dormire sonni tranquilli, almeno da questo punto di vista. Se infatti si credesse veramente a ciò che tali osservazioni lasciano supporre, a essere minacciata non sarebbe tanto la sicurezza nazionale degli Stati Uniti, quanto l'integrità di alcune leggi fondamentali della fisica, di quelle che – tanto per intenderci – si cominciano a studiare già alle medie e su cui si basa il funzionamento di tutto ciò che ci circonda. Poiché un'impresa di questo genere non sarebbe certo alla portata di nessuno che viva ora sul pianeta Terra, non resterebbero da considerare che le tre possibilità seguenti: l'esistenza di extraterrestri molto più avanzati di noi provenienti da un'altra stella del nostro universo; la possibilità che nostri lontani discendenti siano in grado di viaggiare indietro nel tempo; l'esistenza di esseri intelligenti provenienti da un altro universo parallelo.
Tutte e tre queste possibilità sono estremamente poco plausibili, ma le ultime due lo sono molto più della prima, per svariati motivi. Quanto ai viaggi interstellari, non c'è nulla in ciò che sappiamo che li vieti in linea di principio, ma sarebbero incredibilmente complicati, anche dalle stelle più vicine alla nostra. Comunque, non è questo il punto. L'astronomo Carl Sagan amava ripetere – riprendendo Laplace – che "affermazioni straordinarie richiedono prove straordinarie". L'evidenza finora disponibile a sostegno delle spiegazioni più stupefacenti di Ufo o Uap è però ben lungi dall'essere straordinaria e nulla è radicalmente cambiato dagli anni 40 del secolo scorso a oggi. Quindi non mi sorprenderei se anche tutti i pochi casi dubbi venissero alla fine attribuiti al malfunzionamento dei sensori, a problemi del *software* o a un'errata interpretazione dei dati.

*Ricercatore presso il Laboratorio di dinamica del volo spaziale dell'Istituto di scienza e tecnologie dell'informazione, Cnr

I timori del Pentagono, che non siano extra-terrestri

*di Gregory Alegi**

Il rapporto recentemente pubblicato dall'Office of the director of national Intelligence Usa sostiene che gli Stati Uniti sono "privi di dati che indichino che un qualsivoglia Uap sia parte di un programma straniero di raccolta di informazioni o indicanti un grande salto tecnologico da parte di un potenziale avversario". È questa incertezza che spiega il nuovo interesse per il fenomeno e la necessità di aumentare le conoscenze su di esso

"Alcuni Uap potrebbero essere tecnologie messe in campo da Cina, Russia, altro Paese o entità non governative". La valutazione più calzante del rinnovato interesse degli Stati Uniti per gli oggetti volanti non identificati sta in questa frase della versione non classificata della valutazione preliminare sugli Unidentified aerial phenomena, pubblicata il 25 giugno 2021 dall'Office of the director of national Intelligence.

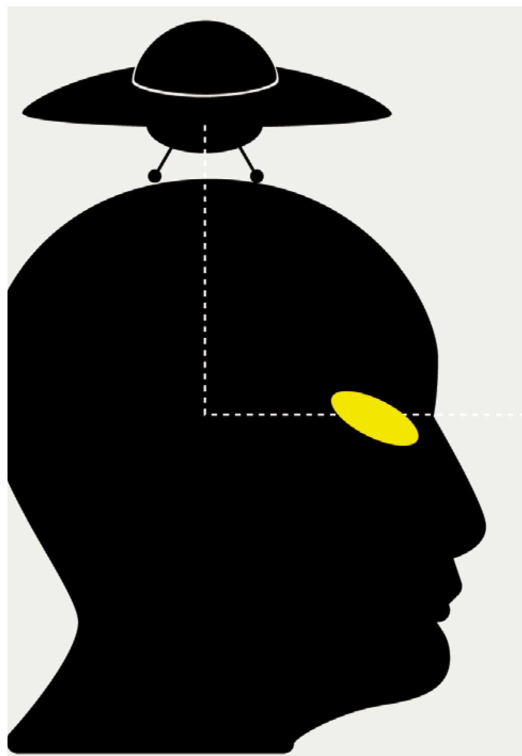
Non si tratta dell'unica chiave di lettura possibile per gli ex Ufo: oltre ai Foreign adversary systems (Sistemi avversari stranieri, Fap) e alla generica categoria "altro", gli Uap potrebbero essere Airborne clutter ("rumore volante", dagli uccelli ai sacchetti di plastica, passando per i palloni), fenomeni atmosferici naturali (comprese le variazioni di temperatura lette da sensori all'infrarosso) oppure programmi di sviluppo classificati di enti americani statali o privati. Nonostante le sue evidenti ritrosie, è chiaro che il documento non esprime il timore dell'astronave aliena ma quello piuttosto degli assai più concreti avversari terrestri. Questo spiega perché il fenomeno Uap/Ufo, prima studiato dalla sola Us Navy, sia ora interesse trasversale del dipartimento della Difesa, che il 23 novembre ha annunciato la creazione di uno specifico Airborne object identification and management synchronization group, che riporterà al sottosegretario alla Difesa con delega per Intelligence e Security. Benché la sua struttura non sia ancora stata annunciata, l'Aoimsg (a proposito: che sigla impossibile! Dov'è finita la leggendaria abilità americana di creare acronimi?) avrà lo scopo di accentrare e coordinare gli sforzi fatti in questo campo dalla Difesa e altri enti statali, a partire, si immagina, dalla Federal aviation administration, che ha competenza anche sulla gestione del traffico aereo.

Alla base del fenomeno Uap sta la constatazione che sensori e piloti vedono talvolta "cose" più o meno bizzarre, che nella stragrande maggioranza dei casi sono associate o si spiegano con fenomeni atmosferici, errori di percezione o malfunzionamenti degli apparati. Al department of Defence (doD) e all'Office of the director of national Intelligence (Odni) interessa la percentuale infinitesimale senza una spiegazione valida. Soprattutto se gli avvistamenti avvengono negli "Spazi aerei a uso speciale" (Sua), che vanno da quelli proibiti (per esempio attorno a Camp David) a quelli ristretti (intorno ai poligoni) o militari. In questi casi, la curiosità per la natura degli Uap cede il passo ai timori per conseguenze che vanno dalle interferenze alle collisioni, dallo spionaggio agli attacchi veri e propri.

NEVADA_ L’Area 51 e i suoi misteri

L’Area 51 è una zona militare del Nevada non distante da Las Vegas. Durante la Guerra fredda è stata sede di molti *test* per il funzionamento di droni e aerei spia. Se essa è stata associata agli Ufo è soprattutto per via del programma militare sugli aerei U-2 iniziato lì nel 1955. Questi velivoli invisibili ai radar sono stati più volte associati a oggetti volanti non identificati, ma per le autorità Usa, in quegli anni, probabilmente, alimentare le superstizioni era spesso più facile che svelare questioni militari confidenziali.

Il rapporto tace sul numero degli avvistamenti, limitandosi a dire che l’arco di tempo considerato va dal 2004 al 2021 e che le segnalazioni da fonti governative sono 144, delle quali 80 compiute con molteplici sensori. Di queste, una sola è stata spiegata (“un pallone, in corso di sgonfiaggio”). Gli altri casi sono considerati reali ma insoluti: resta infatti impossibile spiegare come “alcuni Uap sembrino restare fermi nel vento, muoversi contro vento, manovrare bruscamente, o muoversi a velocità considerevoli pur essendo apparentemente privi di sistemi di propulsione”.
Il rapporto Odni dichiara come oggi gli Stati Uniti siano “privi di dati che indichino che un qualsivoglia Uap sia parte di un programma straniero di raccolta di informazioni o indicanti un grande salto tecnologico da parte di un potenziale avversario”. È questa incertezza che spiega il nuovo interesse per gli Uap e la necessità di aumentare la raccolta di dati in vista della possibilità di trattarli con specifici algoritmi per cercare addensamenti che si trasformino in elementi di valutazione. La creazione di uno specifico ufficio dovrebbe servire a stimolare le segnalazioni che fino a oggi i piloti potrebbero aver taciuto per paura di passare per pazzi. Ampliare il campo di osservazione farebbe anche capire se gli addensamenti attorno alle Sua siano reali o frutto della forte sorveglianza alla quale queste aree sono da sempre soggette.
La psicosi degli Ufo degli anni Cinquanta è spesso stata considerata una proiezione dei timori della Guerra fredda, in cui i dischi volanti incarnavano il timore di un attacco sovietico e gli alieni sotto sembianze umane erano una metafora delle spie comuniste infiltrate nella società americana, in puro stile maccartista. A settant’anni di distanza, gli Ufo hanno cambiato nome e la metafora è sparita, ma la sostanza dei timori della Difesa americana resta immutata: e se gli Uap fossero velivoli nemici con caratteristiche avanzatissime?



*Professore di History and politics of the Usa presso l’Università Luiss Guido Carli

Avvistamenti tra Usa e Italia



I dati Usa

Gli avvistamenti di Ufo/Uap sono tra dossier prioritari del Pentagono e questo anche perché, nell'ultimo anno, gli americani hanno segnalato quasi il doppio degli avvistamenti rispetto all'anno precedente. Basti pensare che, secondo il National Ufo reporting center, nei primi tre mesi del 2020, il numero di avvistamenti è stato superiore del 112% rispetto ai primi tre mesi del 2019.

Il report dell'Intelligence

Il Preliminary assesment emanato dall'Office of the director of national intelligence Usa e basato sui dati raccolti dalla Us Navy, dall'Fbi e dalla Uap task force è il più esteso rapporto mai dedicato al fenomeno degli Ufo. Pubblicato con lo scopo di presentare una valutazione della minaccia proveniente dai fenomeni aerei non identificati, esprime le difficoltà delle autorità di trarre conclusioni definitive sulla natura o l'intento di essi.

LA CLASSIFICAZIONE DI HYNEK

La classificazione impiegata per la sistematizzazione degli avvistamenti Ufo si deve all'astrofisico e professore di astronomia Josef Allen Hynek. A partire dagli anni 70, in tutto il mondo si utilizza lo schema di Hynek che, inizialmente basato su tre categorie, ad oggi conta sette tipi di avvistamento, a distanza e ravvicinati.

I TIPO

Avvistamento/incontro a distanza. Luci notturne o oggetti diurni, la cui traiettoria risulta non riferibile ad oggetti conosciuti. Danno l'impressione di un comportamento intelligente.

II TIPO

Avvistamento/incontro a distanza. Oggetto insolito e manifestazione di effetti collaterali di interazione con l'ambiente e/o con le persone.

Il fenomeno Ufo/Uap e gli avvistamenti correlati vengono osservati dai governi di molti Paesi. Il motivo è la sicurezza nazionale. E se potenze ostili avessero nel loro novero capacità e strumenti sconosciuti? Ad oggi, anche la questione degli Oggetti volanti non identificati si staglia sullo sfondo della competizione tecnologica mondiale

I fenomeni in Italia

In Italia, negli ultimi due anni, sono 11 le segnalazioni raccolte dal Reparto generale sicurezza dell'Aeronautica. Nel 2021, sono stati registrati diversi avvistamenti: a Bernareggio, a Firenze e Caltanissetta. Secondo il Reparto, questi eventi non sono risultati associabili ad "attività di volo o di radiosondaggio" e per questo sono stati catalogati come avvistamenti di Oggetto volante non identificato (Ovni).



Ci pensa l'Aeronautica

In Italia, a seguito all'ondata di avvistamenti di Ovni del 1978, l'allora presidente del Consiglio Giulio Andreotti designò l'Aeronautica militare quale organismo istituzionale deputato a raccogliere, verificare e monitorare le segnalazioni inerenti al fenomeno. Oggi, il lavoro è portato aventi dal Reparto generale sicurezza dello Stato maggiore dell'Aeronautica.

III TIPO

Avvistamento/incontro a distanza. Oggetti e fenomeni analoghi a quelli delle due precedenti categorie, ma con contemporanea osservazione di presunti passeggeri, descritti per lo più come entità animate di aspetto umanoide.

IV TIPO

Avvistamento/incontro ravvicinato. Casi di "abduction" o rapimento. Si tratta dei casi di presunto sequestro di testimoni da parte degli occupanti degli Ufo.

V TIPO

Avvistamento/incontro ravvicinato bilaterale posto in essere con iniziative umane coscienti volontarie e attive, o tramite la cooperazione volontaria con intelligenze extraterrestri.

VI TIPO

Avvistamento/incontro ravvicinato la cui conseguenza siano lesioni gravi a lungo termine.

VII TIPO

Avvistamento/incontro ravvicinato. Interazione avanzata umano-aliena.

Dal passato al futuro, un fenomeno da indagare

*di Roberto Pinotti**

Oggi, sul tema Ufo/Uap si assiste a un cambio di paradigma. L'inconfessato ma generale approccio delle autorità dei vari Paesi è ora quello del reverse engineering, teso a copiare la tecnologia avanzata che il fenomeno sottende. Tutto ciò ha riportato in auge la Extra-terrestrial hypothesis quale possibile soluzione della questione. Una soluzione scomoda e temuta, oggi non più improbabile, che imporrebbe non solo la detronizzazione dell'uomo inteso come centro dell'universo, ma anche l'assunzione dell'opportunità del contatto con altre specie intelligenti del cosmo

Apparsa a livello mediatico per la prima volta il 24 giugno del 1947 negli Stati Uniti e poi diventata celebre in tutto il mondo, la questione degli Ufo/Uap è stata affrontata dall'Us Air force per ventitré anni con il Project blue book, poi chiuso nel 1969 con 701 casi inspiegati su oltre 12mila esaminati, perché non si riteneva che il problema rilevasse come pericolo per la sicurezza nazionale. Oggi, il Pentagono ha invece ammesso di essersene poi occupato segretamente e mediante l'Intelligence, dichiarando anche che si tratta di un fenomeno esistente, intelligente, tecnologicamente avanzato e di ignota origine e che è di esplicito interesse della Difesa nazionale. La questione resta dunque tecnica e più che mai aperta. Il tema è affrontato a livello governativo, in Francia con la Commissione scientifica Geipan e nel Regno Unito dal ministero della Difesa. Lo stesso accade pure per molti altri Paesi europei e latino-americani. In Italia, dal 1979, dopo il rifiuto di seguire il tema da parte del Cnr, la questione è appannaggio del Reparto generale sicurezza della nostra Aeronautica, che ha archiviato senza censure oltre 400 *dossier* ufficiali, senza che però sussistessero finalità di studio o di memoria storica. Alcuni di questi casi restano secretati, come ad esempio è ancora per l'evento dell'agosto 1963 in cui un "disco volante" con tre oblò evoluì a bassa quota sull'auto del presidente della Repubblica, Antonio Segni, nella tenuta presidenziale di Castel Porziano.

Gli avvistamenti spaziano da quelli strumentali a quelli ottici, sia a breve distanza sia corredati da tracce fisiche, ovvero dalla presenza di occupanti di aspetto umanoide discesi al suolo osservati da testimoni attendibili. Anche la Marina militare italiana ha registrato alcuni *splash down* degli Ufo e così pure diversi decolli dal mare.

L'accreditato ente civile di ricerca Cun (Centro ufologico nazionale) nato nel 1967 ha in archivio 120 anni di casistica italiana per un totale di oltre 12mila eventi analizzati e quasi mai testimoniati direttamente alle autorità. In Russia, con la caduta dell'Urss è emerso un circostanziato *dossier* ufficiale del Kbg sugli Ufo, diffuso in occidente dal Cun, nel 1994.

Negli anni il Centro ufologico nazionale, in Italia, è stato coinvolto anche dallo Stato maggiore della Difesa, all'estero invece, dalla camera dei Lord britannica e dal governo della Repubblica di San Marino. Negli Stati Uniti, poi, da una commissione di parlamentari nel 2013 e da un comparto vicino al governo cinese tra il 2017 e il 2019. In

“Non si può che rilevare con soddisfazione che il mutato approccio della comunità scientifica, dei *media* e della società nei confronti dei pregiudizi sulla questione Ufo/Uap sarà funzionale a una ben più responsabile presa di coscienza di un problema potenzialmente determinante per tutta l’umanità e il suo futuro”



ultimo, il Cun è stato coinvolto persino dalle autorità degli Emirati Arabi Uniti all’Expo di Dubai. A esso si deve anche la divulgazione di documenti autenticati da perizie forensi che indicano come, nel ventennio fascista, il fenomeno fu seguito da un gabinetto segreto diretto da Guglielmo Marconi in contatto con i vertici del regime. La Chiesa cattolica, dal canto suo, ha latinizzato l’acronimo Ufo in Res inexplicatae volantes, dimostrando una seria attenzione al fenomeno, mentre in campo spaziale le dirette segnalazioni in orbita di molti celebri astronauti russi e americani proiettano il fenomeno fuori della Terra.

Oggi, constatato il cambio di paradigma che interessa la questione Ufo/Uap, l’inconfessato ma generale approccio delle autorità dei vari Paesi è quello della cosiddetta retro-ingegneria (*reverse engineering*) teso a copiare la tecnologia di questi dispositivi. Tutto ciò ha riportato in auge la Eth (Extra-terrestrial hypothesis) quale possibile risposta al problema. Si tratta di una soluzione scomoda e temuta, ma oggi non più improbabile, che imporrebbe non solo la progressiva detronizzazione dell’uomo inteso come centro dell’universo, ma anche l’assunzione dell’opportunità del contatto con altre specie intelligenti del cosmo, con tutte le problematiche tecnico-scientifiche, socio-economiche, psicologiche e spirituali del caso. Nel 2021 è così sorto l’Icer (International coalition for extraterrestrial research), il coeso sodalizio mondiale di esperti internazionali del settore teso a parlare con voce unica alle autorità istituzionali di tutto il mondo.

Dati questi elementi non si può che rilevare con soddisfazione che oggi, indiscutibilmente, il mutato approccio della comunità scientifica, dei *media* e della società nei confronti dei pregiudizi sulle incognite evocate dal fenomeno Ufo/Uap non potrà che essere funzionale a una maggiore e ben più responsabile presa di coscienza di un problema potenzialmente determinante per tutta l’umanità e il suo futuro.

*Presidente del Centro ufologico nazionale, Cun e della Coalizione internazionale per la ricerca extraterrestre, Icer

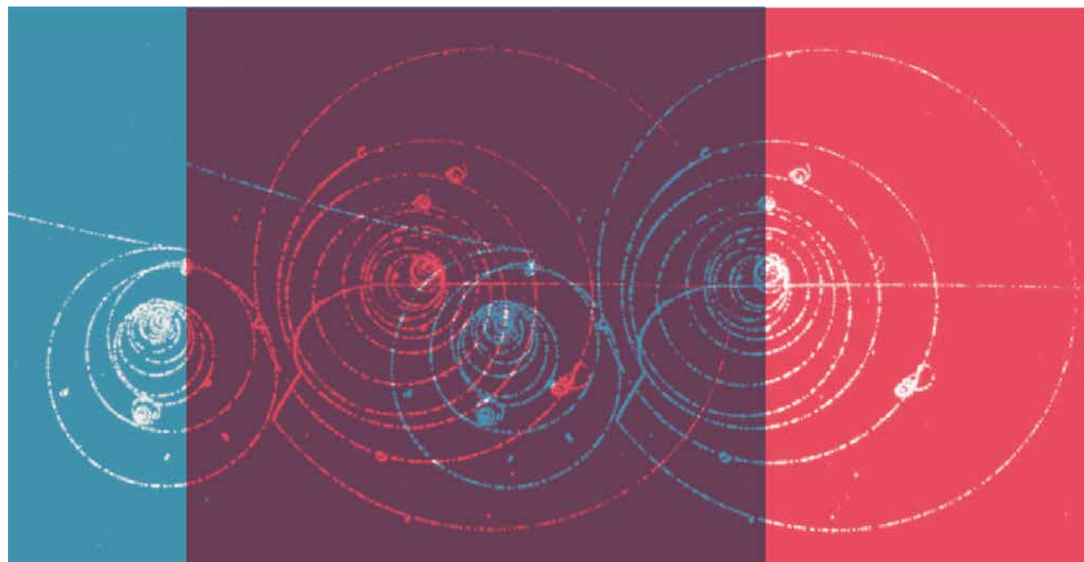
Un Universo di possibilità

di Roberto Vittori
ASTRONAUTA E GENERALE DELL'AERONAUTICA MILITARE

Se ipotizzassimo che gli Ufo/Uap non appartengono alla nostra tridimensione, perché, in alcune circostanze, ne abbiamo avuto una qualche forma di evidenza indiretta con apparizioni, suoni, filmati o racconti? È come trovarsi in una stanza buia, arredata da un tavolo che, però, non vediamo. Continueremo a non avere idea dell'esistenza del tavolo fino a che non ci sbatteremo contro. Del resto, che l'essere umano sia l'unico essere intelligente nell'Universo è molto improbabile; ma anche se esistessero altre forme intelligenti che non interagiscono almeno direttamente con il nostro mondo tridimensionale, l'uomo non può e non potrà averne evidenza se non indirettamente

Unidentified flying object, Ufo, è la sigla che si riferisce ad un fenomeno che ritorna molto spesso all'attenzione degli specialisti e dell'opinione pubblica, sotto varie forme e in vari contesti. Sostanzialmente, si tratta di un qualcosa che non si riesce a identificare e categorizzare come appartenente alle capacità tecnologiche di nostro appannaggio. Nel corso della mia esperienza come pilota, e successivamente come astronauta, non mi è mai capitato di vedere nulla che possa rientrare a far parte del fenomeno Ufo/Uap. Il tema è tuttavia affascinante. Seguendolo con attenzione, mi sono fatto un'opinione precisa non direttamente collegabile alla mia esperienza come astronauta, ma piuttosto alla mia parallela attività come ricercatore di fisica. In effetti, il punto di partenza per cercare di spiegare il fenomeno è riflettere sul fatto che il mondo in cui viviamo, o almeno, il nostro modo di percepirlo, è tridimensionale. È infatti a tutti nota la possibilità dell'esistenza di altre dimensioni che con i nostri sensi non riusciamo a distinguere direttamente o completamente e con le quali non possiamo interagire. Se analizziamo la realtà a partire da questo assunto, si può sostenere che esistono dei fenomeni non classificabili come "terrestri" perché non sono parte del nostro mondo tridimensionale. A questo punto, si propone un paradosso di logica. Se ipotizzassimo che i fenomeni Ufo non appartengono alla nostra tridimensione, perché, in alcune circostanze, ne abbiamo avuto una qualche forma di evidenza indiretta con apparizioni, suoni, filmati o racconti? È come trovarsi in una stanza buia, arredata da un tavolo che, però, non vediamo. Continueremo a non avere idea dell'esistenza del tavolo fino a che non ci sbatteremo contro. Del resto, che l'essere umano sia l'unico essere intelligente nell'Universo è molto improbabile; ma anche se esistessero altre forme intelligenti che non interagiscono almeno direttamente con il nostro mondo tridimensionale, l'uomo non può e non potrà averne evidenza se non indirettamente. E un'impostazione simile non è nuova per la fisica. Se pensiamo ai paradossi, per esempio a quello per cui se guardiamo una stella ciò che vediamo non è ciò che è oggi ma ciò che era decine, centinaia e migliaia di milioni di anni fa o a quello dell'infinitamente piccolo, per il quale, in maniera simile ma opposta vige il principio di indeterminazione, ovvero l'impossibilità di

“Il punto di partenza per cercare di spiegare il fenomeno è riflettere sul fatto che il mondo in cui viviamo, o almeno, il nostro modo di percepirlo, è tridimensionale. È infatti nota a tutti la possibilità dell’esistenza di altre dimensioni che con i nostri sensi non riusciamo a distinguere direttamente e con le quali non possiamo interagire”



avere completa percezione delle particelle subatomiche.
Per concludere, credo che le forme intelligenti esistano e il motivo per cui esse non si manifestano in maniera diretta ai nostri occhi è per la bassa probabilità che qualunque siano le loro forme, esse abbiano un’impostazione tridimensionale come la nostra. Evidente e giustificata, quindi è la grande attenzione dell’opinione pubblica mondiale per il fenomeno. Tra i Paesi, sono gli Stati Uniti quelli che dimostrano maggiore attenzione. Dal lato europeo, non esiste infatti un interesse paragonabile allo sforzo statunitense sul tema. E ciò è principalmente perché gli Usa hanno da sempre una postura più difensiva in generale, percependo come molto probabile la possibilità di un attacco militare diretto contro di loro. La sensibilità americana in questo senso è massima e, come conseguenza, gli Usa sono portati ad analizzare e studiare qualsiasi attività o fenomeno non immediatamente riconducibile a circostanze o situazioni note. Gli Stati Uniti dimostrano in maniera evidente una sensibilità altissima verso tutto ciò che possa interferire ed intrudere nella loro sfera di influenza. La rinnovata attenzione americana sulle armi ipersoniche, per esempio, ha motivazioni molto simili a quelle che portarono la presidenza Reagan a lanciare l’idea dello Sdi, Strategic defense initiative, meglio noto come scudo spaziale, premesse che hanno molto in comune anche con quelle che portano gli Stati Uniti a studiare con estrema attenzione qualsiasi fenomeno non identificato.

The San Francisco Call

TUESDAY..................DECEMBER 1, 1896

AMUSEMENTS.

BALDWIN THEATER—"Dr. Belgraff."
COLUMBIA THEATER—"The New South."
MOROSCO'S OPERA-HOUSE—"Midnight Alarm."
TIVOLI OPERA HOUSE—"The Little Duke."
ORPHEUM—High-Class Vaudeville.
ALCAZAR THEATER—"End of the Century."
NEW BUSH-STREET THEATER.—T. A. Kennedy, the Hypnotist.
METROPOLITAN TEMPLE.—Piano Recital, Saturday, December 5.
THE CHUTES AND SKATING RINK.—Daily at Haight street, one block east of the Park.
SUTRO BATHS—Bathing and performances.
PACIFIC COAST JOCKEY CLUB.—Races to-day.

AUCTION SALES.

BY CHAS. LEVY & CO.—This day, December 1, Furniture at salesroom, 1135 Market street, at 10 o'clock.
BY FRANK W. BUTTERFIELD—This day, December 1, Furniture, at 3631 Twenty-first street, at 2 o'clock.
BY MADIGAN & CO.—This day, December 1, Wagons, etc., at 1122 Mission street.
BY INDIANA AUCTION CO.—This day, December 1, Furniture, at 1057 Market st., at 11 o'clock.
BY SULLIVAN & DOYLE—This day, December 1, Horses, etc., at 1601 Harrison st.
BY EASTON & ELDRIDGE.—This day, December 1, Real Estate, at salesroom, 638 Market street, at 12 o'clock.

CITY NEWS IN BRIEF.

The Board of Education received a dozen plans for the Mission High School.

Members of the Board of Education favor a temporary high school at the Mission.

Cloudy weather and probably rain Tuesday; warmer.—A. G. McAdie, local forecast official.

John Flahiss, a switchman, died from being run over by a freight train near Long Bridge.

John B. McGregor, a balloonist, is under arrest for forging another's name to a postal order.

Improvement clubs promise to have a lively meeting at Columbia Hall on Page street to-night.

Nick Goethert, the owner of a sandwich wagon, was arrested last evening for grand larceny.

The Monday-evening Dancing Class held the first meeting of the season at Golden Gate Hall last evening.

The Supervisors yesterday extended the time for the payment of rebates on taxes until the 16th inst.

Judge Murphy will decide whether Nat Goodwin is in contempt of court at 10 o'clock this morning.

Bishop Newman spoke for the first time at the San Francisco Methodist Preachers' meeting yesterday.

Jockey Chevalier will leave this morning to ride for Emil Schumann in the Guatemala Christmas races.

Ten new cases of diphtheria were reported at the Health Office yesterday, making forty-seven for the month.

Colonel T. H. Goodman, general passenger agent of the Southern Pacific, has recovered from his sickness and resumed work.

Judge Slack has decided that the City has title to all the lots lying in the beds of old Mission Creek and old Channel Creek.

James Franklin Smith, tailor, 819 Market street, was arrested on an indictment of the Grand Jury charging him with perjury.

Julian Sonntag of the State Miners' Association does not favor a mining exhibit in the Park, but wants reliable data and maps.

The ordinance prohibiting betting on horse-races outside the confines of a racetrack was passed to print by the Supervisors yesterday.

The Supreme Court will hear a motion argued next Monday for permission to introduce briefs in the case of Durrant, by his attorneys.

Father R. B. Brennan opened the St. Francis parochial school yesterday in spite of the edict of the Board of Health ordering it closed.

W. H. H. Hart reiterates that the airship story is a reality, and that the public will receive positive proof that they have not been hoaxed.

The residence of W. H. Baker, 311 Castro street, was entered by burglars Saturday night, and several valuable articles of jewelry were stolen.

The will of Jacob Z. Davis has been contested on the ground that his true name was Dediker and that the legatees under his will are not related to him.

Tommy Tracey and Jim Ryan fought a draw last night at Union Hall; Rochette was given the decision over Butler and Steizner knocked Johnson out.

The United States gunboat Bennington coaled yesterday and will start for Callao today. At the latter port she will join the Philadelphia.

Sarah Luntz, a young woman whose actions resemble those of a horse, was taken from the Almshouse yesterday and will be sent to the Ukiah Asylum to-day.

Ingleside Track reopened again yesterday with a large attendance. The winning horses were: Senator Morgan, Red Glenn, Lincoln II, Midlo, Preston and Arrezzo.

The Supreme Court has granted "Kid" Thompson, who was concerned with Alva Johnson in ditching a Southern Pacific train at Pascoe station, a new trial.

Miss Helen Van Winkle and Edson W. A. Waterhouse of the firm of Lester & Waterhouse were married last evening at the residence of the bride's parents on Howard street.

The Shenandoah came down from Port Costa yesterday and will sail for Europe to-day. An hour after she was anchored in the bay the crew was aboard and the vessel ready for sea.

The gasoline launches Amy and Athlete had a race around Goat Island yesterday. The Amy, much to the surprise of Attorney George A. Knight the owner of the Athlete, won the race.

The contempt proceedings against Ramon Montenegro, a gambler, for alleged tampering with witnesses in a case against him in Judge Joachimsen's court were continued yesterday till Friday.

Word comes from Sacramento that about two weeks ago several respectable citizens witnessed an aerial exhibition. They state that the airship they saw was bright as if made of metal.

The retail fruit and poultry dealers will hold their first annual ball to-morrow evening at Native Sons' Hall, 414 Mason street. Neither time nor expense have been spared to make this ball a success.

Citizens of Los Angeles were last evening treated to a sight of three lights that they supposed to be attached to an airship that sailed over the city from the northeast and two hours later retraced their course.

George W. Banks, the embezzling agent of Wells, Fargo & Co., is said to be living in Hongkong under the name of George F. Smith. He has spent all the money he got and is bitterly repentant of his misdeeds.

Mrs. Adolfine Seneloh, alias Mrs. James Henry of Danville, Contra Costa County, who attempted suicide on October 26 by shooting herself through the body, was committed to the Napa Insane Asylum yesterday.

After some wrangling in court yesterday it was decided that the inspection of the Craven deeds, which was to have been held in the office of Delmas & Shortridge on Wednesday, will take place in Judge Slack's courtroom.

During a row in Carlson's saloon, near the Ingleside racetrack, Sunday night, Thomas Foy, a stableman, was stabbed in the neck by John Rooney, another stableman, and Rooney was beaten into unconsciousness by Foy's friends.

An incipient fire on the British ship Granada caused some consternation at Mission-street wharf a couple of days ago. The heat from the stove in the captain's cabin set the woodwork afire and did some damage before it was put out.

The facts of a meeting in Judge Hebbard's chambers and an agreement that the board of directors of the People's Home Savings Bank should resign and a new board should be chosen were testified to yesterday in the Williams libel case in Judge Daingerfield's court.

Chief Officer Dowdell of the Alameda was back at his post yesterday. Four years ago he was washed into the scuppers by a sea that came aboard and had his right leg and one of his arms broken. He has been recuperating ever since, but is now as hale and hearty as ever he was.

Divorces Granted Yesterday.

Divorces have been granted by the Superior Court as follows: Annie E. Langa from Jessie J. Langa, for failure to provide; Mary T. Giblin from John J. Giblin, for habitual intemperance; Louise M. Abresch from George P. Abresch, for willful neglect.

The Dockery Charges.

The charges of blackmail filed against Milk Inspector J. P. Dockery will be tried before Judge Hunt next Tuesday.

SAILED OVER LOS ANGELES

Three Strange Lights Seen Above the City of Angels.

BACK ON THEIR COURSE

Hart Tells Why His Client's Airship Takes to Great Altitudes.

IS MUCH EASIER TO OPERATE

The Attorney Gives an Account of a Wonderful Electric Storage Battery.

Every day and every night add more testimony from those who have seen or claim to know something about the mysterious lights that for the past two weeks have appeared in the sky from Central to Southern California. Every day and every night add to the number of those who are converted from skepticism to a belief that these lights are attached to an airship or aerial craft such as the world has never seen before.

Whatever all these mysterious things may be it stands to reason that the mystery cannot exist for ever, and in all probability the truth will be known ere many days or weeks pass. It is the purpose of THE CALL to secure this knowledge and present it to the public, be it airship or hoax.

The telegraphic dispatches published in yesterday's CALL gave accounts of the appearance of strange lights making rapid flights over the San Fernando Valley, in Los Angeles County. Last night the people of Los Angeles City were treated to the strange sight. Two fixed lights passed over the city at a high rate of speed and at a very great distance from the earth. A third light that appeared to have all the characteristics of a searchlight in the hands of a skillful manipulator was also seen in conjunction with the two fixed lights. These passed according to reports from the northwest to the southeast, and two hours later they reappeared, passing from the southeast to the northwest. A number who witnessed the phenomenon were inclined to believe that some practical joker was sending up toy balloons from the hills, but those who believed in the airship theory were unable to understand how toy balloons could pass in opposite directions over the same course, or what kind of toy balloon was used that could stay up at a high altitude with lights ablaze for over two hours.

Ex-Attorney-General W. H. H. Hart, the attorney for the inventor, while discussing the power that could be or is used for airships, made public some very interesting information regarding the new Fargo storage battery in which he is interested. He stated that the whole apparatus of a twenty-horsepower storage battery weighs only about 125 or 130 pounds. The receiving jars proper have been reduced to such a small compass that they weigh less than three pounds, and that a jar of this size can be charged from an ordinary incandescent light wire. Under such circumstances the master of an airship would have but little trouble in taking in "fuel" that would enable him to travel a great many miles. He could have his ship secreted in the hills, walk into any town along the route on which he might chose to travel, hire a room in a hotel, tap a wire, fill his soda bottles with chain lightning and resume his voyage through the upper air for another hundred miles or more.

The proposition seems almost too gigantic to be true, but stranger things have happened in the realm of science within the last few years.

A late dispatch received last night from Los Angeles reads as follows:

"The mysterious airship was seen again here to-night. The thing moved about over the city for an hour. There is no doubt as to the genuineness of the phenomenon, whatever it might be. Jack Faulkner, Richard Sweet and other reputable citizens, who were directly under the strange visitor, state that they saw its wings. It created great excitement on the streets to-night."

WHY HE SAILS HIGH.

Attorney Hart Tells Why the Airship Is Taken Far From the Earth.

General W. H. H. Hart still insists that the much-talked-of airship is a reality and that the thousand or more people who have seen lights moving in the sky and were able to discern the outlines of an object above were not the victims of high-pressure imaginations. He goes still further and asserts that there are two airships now moving about in the heavens over the Golden State, a large one and a smaller one. He believes that one is now in the southern part of the State and the other is prowling around through heretofore unexplored space in the more northern latitudes.

"Then your inventor must have an assistant who understands aerial navigation as well as himself," was suggested to General Hart.

"Yes, he has," was the response. "He told me that there is very little trouble in handling the machine. All that is required is a good cool-headed man with a fair amount of common-sense and one who is not likely to become excited or lose his presence of mind at high altitudes.

"I have no doubt that he has such men with him. At least he told me that he had. You must remember that an airship is very easy to handle at extremely high altitudes—much easier than near the surface of the earth."

In explaining what he meant by this assertion General Hart gave some interesting information as to why the lights are always seen at such great distances from the earth. He illustrated his point by calling attention to the fact that an ordinary gas or hot-air balloon, on being released from the ground, darts like an arrow from a bow into the air and that the farther away from the earth it gets the slower its upward flight.

"The reason for this," he explained, "is that after the balloon has reached a certain altitude the gas that carried it to that point is not so much lighter than the surrounding atmosphere and its buoyancy is thereby decreased. Then aerial navigation becomes practically easy, for the operator does not have to expend power in forcing the balloon filled with gas and the airship attachment against the wind. This is the reason that the inventor has gone so high when experimenting with his ship. He tells me that at a great height he can go against the wind with comparative ease, but that at 300 or 400 feet from the ground he is compelled to use up a great deal of power."

The subject uppermost in the general's mind, the freeing of Cuba from Spain, came to the surface in the conversation, and the attorney said that "the inventor is likely at any time to pack up his smaller airship and start for the scene of bloodshed and trouble."

"It can be easily done," he said. "In the first place the material of the outfit is light, and the ship can readily be packed in cases and shipped away by rail without attracting the least attention, and it would take but a short time to put it together again."

"How could this be done when your power is a storage battery that will only last six hours?" was asked.

"There would be no difficulty about that," was the response. "The Fargo storage battery can be recharged anywhere where there is an electric-light wire, and there are electric power and lighting plants in all of the towns from here to Arizona, and from Arizona to the Southern States.

"The whole apparatus of the twenty-horsepower Fargo battery does not weigh over 125 pounds, and the storage battery proper can be carried in your overcoat pocket, it not weighing over three pounds. Each section weighs but a little more than a sodawater bottle filled with water. He could come into this office and charge his entire battery by tapping one of those incandescent-light wires. So, you see that he could take his ship across the continent without any trouble at all. Speaking of the expedition to Cuba reminds me that already I am beginning to receive letters from people who desire to go as volunteers in the new aerial navy. Here is one. I will read it to you, but not give the writer's name:

MADERA, 11—29—'96.

W. H. H. Hart—DEAR SIR: If it is possible please consider me as a volunteer for the party in the airship to go to Cuba. I am 40 years of age and in perfect health and strength. Am a fairly educated man, a good telegraph operator, stenographer and typewriter operator. I understand that it will be a very hazardous enterprise, but believe me, there is no danger that I am not perfectly willing and glad to face.

I shall fear nothing and will go anywhere and do anything my superiors may command or desire. It does not matter to any one if I am killed, as I have no ties. I have no family, relatives or persons relying upon me, and for that reason alone I should be sent. I will take any obligation as to secrecy, faithfulness, etc., and willingly answer with my life for it. High altitudes do not affect me. Please let me hear from you at your earliest convenience. Most respectfully, ———.

"Will you engage him?"

"I will not. I will hand his letter over to the inventor, and he will do with the proposition as he sees fit. I have no doubt but what, as he is related to the electrician of Maceo's army, all the arrangements were made as to the crew and other details before he came to this part of the continent. As I have said before, he came here to test his airship in the high altitudes, the lower heavier strata of air and the fogs from the ocean. He wanted to test it under ocean conditions. In the East the wind blows from the land to the sea, but here it blows in from the sea, and in an expedition over Cuba he wants to be thoroughly familiar with ocean atmosphere. The last time I saw the inventor his purpose was to operate his ship in the high, dry atmosphere over the southern part of the State, and from the telegraphic accounts in THE CALL he must be there now with one of his airships. We are told that his lights have been seen by hundreds in Los Angeles County, and I have no idea that they were jack-o'-lanterns or fakes."

SEEN OVER LOS ANGELES.

The City Excited Over Bright Lights Apparently Under Some One's Control.

LOS ANGELES, CAL., Nov. 30.—Los Angeles is excited and people are gazing upward from every corner at what all who have seen them declare are the lights of an airship. The altitude of these strange lights was very great and the movement was from northwest to southeast. Passengers on board many of the streetcar lines witnessed the zigzag glimmer as it floated slowly and placidly through the upper air.

Most of the force of the two morning dailies saw the lights, which reappeared after two hours' time, going in the opposite direction. Some of the witnesses describe the appearance of these lights, two of which were fixed, while a third light had the characteristics of a searchlight and was apparently under the operation of a skilled manipulator.

These lights were seen by so many reputable citizens that the town is talking nothing else to-night except the strange lights and the probable influence of the invention, if it proves such, upon methods of warfare and the transmission of intelligence from one part of the world to another. The probability of the ship is conceded on all hands, and much speculation is rife as to its most important uses in peace and war.

The latest and most conclusive evidence extant reached this city to the effect that Foreman Woods, on Lucky Baldwin's ranch at Santa Anita, had seen the visitor this afternoon by the full light of day. H. A. Unruh, manager of the ranch, places the utmost reliance in the word of his foreman and in consequence said to a CALL correspondent that this statement satisfied him. There is some ground for the report that a genuine airship was being operated among the foothills, not only in the night but in the daytime.

This information was telephoned to the Chamber of Commerce in this city to-day. This information staggers the most credulous. Serious people, judges and prominent business men have now been led to conclude that there is more in aerial philosophy than they had ever dreamed of.

Foreman Woods' description tallies with the published accounts and pictures in THE CALL during the past week, namely: as to its birdlike wings and other characteristics. Mr. Woods claims to have had a good, plain view of the winged visitor, and describes in detail its every part.

The hull or body, he says, is of oval shape, while the wings are long and fashioned remarkably like those of an American eagle. Its rapid movement through the air is what impressed Mr. Woods the most. The machine, he said, was traveling against the wind, and at a rate of speed equal to the fastest train.

The hills about the city are lined with gazers watching for a late reappearance of the ship. To this mass of evidence a hackman, whose occupation keeps him up all night, adds that he has seen the ship as late as 8 A. M. This gentleman, whose name is Carroll, describes the appearance of searchlight feature with clearness.

He says that he is absolutely certain that what he saw was an aerial machine under the guidance of an intelligent being, and that the searchlight was capable of revealing objects on the earth and the general topography of the country to the operators.

SAINT ANDREWS BRETHREN MEET

Thirty-Fourth Celebration Is Marked by a Banquet.

Eloquent Speeches by Irving M. Scott and Charles M. Shortridge.

Officers Elected and Installed, and the Festivities End With a Dance.

The Brotherhood of St. Andrew, 200 strong including lady guests, celebrated its thirty-fourth annual meeting and installation of officers last night at the Palace. The banquet-room was exquisitely decorated. At one end hung a large American flag and at the other end the flag of Scotland, over which were the American colors. The best known of the Scottish people of the City were present, and altogether it was a rare season of enjoyment. Many beautiful costumes were displayed by the ladies.

The installing of the officers took place in the maple room and was informal in character, James S. Webster being the installing officer. The following were the officers installed:

President, Andrew Wilkie; first vice-president, William Watson; second vice-president, P. L. Dunn; treasurer, Y. C. Lawson; recording secretary, W. C. Cook; assistant recording secretary, Alex Rannie; financial secretary, R. D. Colquhoun; assistant financial secretary, J. D. Robertson; librarian, Joseph Gray; trustees—Samuel Irving, John Reid, Richard Gratto, James Scobie, Andrew McNair; board of relief—Joseph P. Cochrane, John M. Duncan, Robert Sutherland; physician, Dr. W. F. McNutt; chaplain, Rev. George D. B. Stewart.

The new president of the Brotherhood, Andrew Wilkie, presided at the elaborate banquet that had been prepared. Immediately on his right sat Irving M. Scott, C. M. Shortridge and Chaplain J. B. Stewart and Mrs. Stewart. On his left were Y. C. Lawson, the Rev. H. C. Minton and Miss Skirvin. It was a happy and enthusiastic gathering. The band played "In the Garb of Old Gaul" when the repast was finished, and John D. McGilvray, ex-Alderman of Denver and contractor for the Parrott and Spreckels buildings, arose and spoke to the toast of "The Day and a' Wha Honor It."

"A Scotchman is always a good citizen, wherever he is," said Mr. McGilvray, and was greeted with cheers. He spoke of the triumphs of McLaren, Barrie, Crockett and many other famous Scotchmen, and declared that America offered a singularly attractive field for the people of his native land. He made an eloquent address and was frequently applauded.

Everbody joined in singing "God Save the Queen." Then President Wilkie asked for three cheers for the Queen. They were given heartily, but when he asked for three cheers for the President of the United States they were given even more heartily.

The Rev. H. C. Minton, D.D., delivered a humorous address to the toast, "The Land o' Cakes." He said he had missed being born in Scotland only by about 300 years of ancestry in the United States. But these early ancestors had originally come from Scotland, and when he visited that beautiful country last summer he felt almost like a native of Scotland. But the cakes reminded him more of frozen sawdust than anything else. He said he would give a fortune if he had the Scotch accent.

Irving M. Scott spoke eloquently to the toast, "The Land We Live In." He told of the beauties and resources of Scotland only to contrast them finally with those of the United States. "This land," he said, "is our inheritance. In this favored land, where is sent forth a barrel of flour for every man, woman and child, besides what is eaten, there is opportunity for all.

"Here in California, more than any other State, there is no want, while in the old countries of the globe it is met with on every hand." And though building warships he spoke for peace and was warmly applauded. "Peace, not war," he said, "settled the Venezuelan contest.

After the music, "And Are Ye Sure the News Is True," Charles M. Shortridge was called on to speak to the toast of "The Press." He humorously said he presumed the words "and are ye sure the news is true" referred to the airship. For answer he said he would refer to the ex-Attorney-General of the State.

He complimented his old friend Dr. Minton for his eloquent words and Mr. Scott for his exhortation for peace, and then touched directly the subject of the press, advocating unity of action for the good of man. "The press should be united," he said. "By unity it could move mountains. It could make war impossible. It should win the love and not gain the fear of mankind. If it would work in harmony it would command the respect of all. It should be united for law and order, for honest men, in opposition to wrong. It should be for decency and against everything that destroys the home. But I do not appear as the critic of the press, but rather as its champion. Generally speaking, in its work of advancement the press has done a brave part. It is not perfect. It is a great instrument for good."

"The Lassies," was responded to by Andrew McNair, and "Our Sister Societies," by D. Edward Collins. R. Park sang "D'ye Mind Lang Syne"; J. Niven, "The Scottish Kail Brose"; W. C. Cook, "The Red, White and Blue"; and Andrew McNair, "The Lass o' Ballochmyle." Among those present were:

William Mitchell, Miss Graham, Joseph Aitken, Miss Lamson, D. R. McNeill, Miss Veva McNeill, A. W. Scott Jr., Mrs. A. W. Scott Jr., Joseph Gray and wife, General Friedrich, Dr. McNutt, Captain T. P. H. Whitelaw, Miss Daisy Whitelaw, Walter N. Brunt, Miss Jennie Little, Andrew Wilkie Jr., Mrs. Andrew Wilkie Jr., S. J. Hendy, Mrs. S. J. Hendy, James Logan, Mrs. James Logan, Mr. and Mrs. George Davidson, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Gratto, D. K. McMullen and Mrs. C. C. McMullen, Captain N. Richardson and wife, William Watson and Mrs. A. M. Hendry, A. McNair and wife, G. A. Cayney and wife, W. R. Eaton and wife, Hugh McC. Webster, Miss Dillie Webster, Joseph M. Cumming, Charles S. Hendry, Mrs. M. Hendry, Mrs. J. Hendry, I. S. Webster, Mrs. I. S. Webster, Miss L. Webster, James A. Kennedy, G. Burnett, Mrs. G. Burnett, J. H. Strobridge, Mrs. J. H. Strobridge, James Scobie, Mrs. James Scobie, Miss Bella Ross, John McLaren, Mrs. McLaren, W. M. Resie, Richard McLen and the Misses Katy, Annie and Ella McLen, R. McKilican and wife, James Rae and wife, Supervisor William Barr and wife, San Rafael; George W. McNicoll, Miss Belle McNicoll, Captain and Mrs. Johnston, Miss Mary Gleason and B. P. Gleason, Miss E. M. Greenham, Miss May Greenham, P. Livingston Dunn, T. A. Wilkie, Miss Jean Davidson, Donald MacLaren, Miss Jessie Browne, Thomas Mickel, Miss Reid, Robert Reid, Miss Susie McNab, Archibald Reid, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Wilkie Jr., John B. Muirhead, Mrs. J. B. Muirhead, H. Stevenson, James Neven, Miss Graham, William Mitchell, James Aitken, Miss Lawson, Ed C. Duggan, Mrs. Ed C. Duggan, Miss F. Duggan, Miss F. Franklin, George Sword, John Lynn, Alfred L. Morgenstern, Miss Fannie Rech, James C. Symon, Miss Annie Kiernan, William Lehrke, Miss Jessie Gillis, Thomas P. Ross, Samuel Irving, J. Lewis, James Kay, J. Findlay Thompson of Bradford, Eng., Alexander Mackie, Miss Rosabel Mackie, William Little, Miss Gracie Little, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Christie, John Reid, Mrs. John Reid, John McLaren, Mrs. John McLaren, Mrs. James L. Henderson, James Sullivan, Robert Dundas Colquhour.

Arrested for Betrayal.

Henry Sherbert, a machinist by occupation, was arrested last evening by Officer G. Vidau, on complaint of Filiberta Harales, on a charge of betrayal under promise of marriage. Sherbert denies that he committed the crime, but refused to make any further statement.

REBATES TIED UP.

Supervisors Extend the Time for Their Payment—Delinquents Must Pay Up.

It will be the 16th inst. at least before those who are entitled to a rebate on the taxes paid during the early part of this year receive their money. The Board of Supervisors passed a resolution to that effect yesterday and rescinded the measure ordering the payment to begin to-morrow.

This will be a disappointment to a great many taxpayers who have money tied up in the City treasury, and will cause several City officials much trouble and annoyance. Supervisor Dimond, who signed the resolution, gave as a reason for introducing the measure that it was desired by Attorney Willett, who is employed by the board to collect delinquent taxes.

"Mr. Willett," said Mr. Dimond, after the meeting of the board, "has advised us that we have the right to hold back the rebates of those who owe the City for delinquent taxes and force collections in that way.

"We have not consulted the City and County Attorney in regard to the matter, but have no doubt that the delinquent tax collector is correct. We shall try it anyway.

"Those who do not owe delinquent taxes will receive their money as soon as the lists made up by the Auditor can be compared with those in the possession of the collector. The delinquents will have to pay."

Auditor Broderick is of the opinion that the board has no right to hold the rebates to pay the delinquencies, and that if a combination of those who are being kept out of their money test the matter in a legal manner and with the aid of a competent attorney, they will be sustained by the courts.

He is also curious to know why the lists of those who are entitled to rebates have not been called for before, as they have been finished and in his office, bound and ready for use for weeks. In the meantime the brokers are eagerly gathering assignments from among the 29,000 property-owners who have rebates coming, and the chances are that they will collect most of the $175,000 now lying idle in the treasury.

This money is a white elephant on the hands of Treasurer Widber, and he has already made complaints regarding the trouble it has given him. Deputy Treasurer Louis Jacobs said yesterday that from 100 to 300 people call at the treasury each day to get their money and to each one an explanation must be made why the money is not ready for distribution.

"I spend hours repeating the story over and over," he said, "and it is getting rather wearisome. I wish the board would hurry up and let the money be distributed."

HER PECULIAR MALADY.

Sarah Luntz, a Young Woman Whose Actions Resemble Those of a Horse.

She Was Taken From the Almshouse Yesterday to Be Sent to the Ukiah Asylum

Sarah Luntz, an inmate of the Almshouse, whose peculiar malady has been referred to on more than one occasion in THE CALL, is now in the Receiving Hospital, having yesterday been committed to the Ukiah Asylum by the Insanity Commissioners.

She has been an inmate of the Almshouse for the past sixteen years, having been taken there when she was a child about 5 years of age.

Her father was a sailor and her mother a circus rider. All her actions resemble those of a horse. Her teeth are shaped like a horse's teeth, and she bites like that animal.

She cannot speak, and the only sound she utters is something closely resembling the neighing of a horse. If a fly touches her the whole of her body shivers the same as that of a horse in the same predicament.

She has other characteristics resembling the horse. In drinking she sucks up the water; before uttering the neighing sound she lifts up her head; she kicks like a horse, and holds her head to one side when making a bite.

She is blind, but has a fine sense of touch with her hands, which are beautifully formed, and her fingers are long and tapering. She can hear, but has no realization of what is said to her. When spoken to she holds out her hand to be taken hold of and utters a soft whinneying sound. She has beautiful blonde hair and her features are not displeasing.

It was the intention to send her to the Home for the Feeble-minded, but there was no room for her, and it was accordingly decided to send her to the Ukiah Asylum.

STABBED IN THE NECK.

Result of a Row in a Saloon Near the Ingleside Racetrack.

John Rooney and Thomas Foy, stablemen at the Ingleside racetrack, had some trouble in Carlson's saloon, near the racetrack, Sunday night. Rooney stabbed Foy in the neck and Foy's friends retaliated by giving him an unmerciful beating, rendering him unconscious.

Foy and Rooney were taken to the City and County Hospital. Foy's wound was not serious, and after it was dressed he was taken to the Seventeenth-street station by Policemen E. J. Thompson and Atridge and booked for disturbing the peace.

Rooney did not recover conciousness till morphine had been injected into his system. Although badly beaten no bones were broken, and yesterday he was taken from the hospital to the City Prison and booked for assault to murder.

Policemen Thompson and Atridge yesterday morning arrested John Frohman, a hostler at the racetrack, and locked him up in the "tanks" at the City Prison pending an investigation. He is suspected of being one of Foy's friends who beat Rooney.

Santa Claus Is Here.

Once more merry old Santa Claus is in town. This year he has selected as his headquarters the well-known establishment of J. W. Raphael & Co., 13-15 Kearny street, where he has taken possession of the entire second floor of the building, with Little Red Riding Hood to assist him receiving his guests. In his new home Santa Claus has made elaborate preparations for entertaining his visitors, and to all the children he extends a hearty invitation to call and state their wants for Christmas.

Catholic Colleges Football.

Santa Clara College of Santa Clara and St. Mary's College of Oakland, two of the largest Catholic educational institutions on the Pacific Coast, will meet this year in a football match for the first time in their history. The game will be played on the Central Park grounds in this City on Saturday, December 12. Both teams have long been in training for this first intercollegiate match—St. Mary's College under the coaching of Wyckoff of the Reliance team and Santa Clara College under the instruction for some time now of Sheehy of the Olympic team, who was formerly a student of Santa Clara.

Hudelson Libel Case.

The case against Benjamin F. Hudelson, charged with criminal libel by Attorney D. B. Woodworth, was called in Judge Campbell's court yesterday morning, but was on motion continued till this morning. Attorney W. H. Jordan represents the defendant and Attorney F. D. Brandon the complaining witness.

JACOB Z. DAVIS WAS JACOB DEDIKER

Changed His Name in 1849 to Escape an Apprenticeship.

Honorable Career in California as Lumber Merchant and Builder.

His Will Is Now Contested by a Nephew and a Niece Who Allege Undue Influence.

Rev. Joseph P. Wilson and Mrs. Catherine Strad, by their attorneys, Knight & Heggerty, have filed a protest to the admission to probate of the will of the late Jacob Z. Davis, alias Jacob Z. Dediker, who was for many years known in this City and Sacramento as a leading business man, lumber merchant and builder, and who died in Philadelphia on the 28th of last month, leaving an estate valued at more than $2,000,000.

The document filed by Mr. Wilson and Mrs. Strad makes the assertion that John Dediker and Catherine Ziegler were married previous to 1829 and that they were the parents of Henrietta Dediker, George Dediker and Jacob Z. Dediker, the latter being the same person afterward known as Jacob Z. Davis; that Henrietta Dediker and Clayton P. Wilson were married July 5, 1829, and died leaving issue surviving them these petitioners, Joseph P. Wilson, Catherine Strad and Jacob Wilson; that Jacob Wilson died November 20, 1896, and that George Dediker died before Jacob Z. Davis, alias Dediker; that Jacob Z. Davis left him surviving neither wife, nor mother, nor father, nor brother, nor sister, and that these petitioners and the heirs of Jacob Wilson are the only surviving next of kin and heirs at law of Jacob Z. Davis, alias Dediker.

On the 16th of November the will of Davis was filed, in which he bequeathed his entire estate to Lizzie Muir and Belle Curtis. To this disposition of the property the contestants object, and for the grounds of their protest allege that at the time of the alleged execution of the will said Davis was of unsound mind, that the will was not written by him, and that at the time of the alleged execution he was under the undue and improper influence of persons at this time unknown, and which persons poisoned the mind and heart of the deceased against these petitioners and their brother by making false statements to Davis and imposing on him so that he believed that these petitioners were wanting in affection for him and were eager for his death so that they might thereby acquire his estate; which unknown persons did solicit and procure, by arts and wiles and by professions of affection for him, the making of said alleged will, if the same ever was made by him.

The petitioners ask that the alleged will be declared null and void and request a jury trial of the issues thus raised.

The explanation of Mr. Davis' act in changing his name is that he made the change in the year 1849 when he ran away from Philadelphia, his native town, and started for this State in search of fortune. He did not change his name on account of any disgraceful act, however, but only to conceal his identity and thereby escape from an apprenticeship. He had been bound to a tradesman under the apprenticeship system of those days and when the California gold excitement reached the Quaker City young Dediker resolved to join an expedition to the Pacific Coast. To prevent discovery he changed his name to Davis and was known only as Jacob Z. Davis throughout his subsequent career which was honorable and commendatory in every way.

San Francisco
The Call

VOLUME LXXX.—NO. 172. SAN FRANCISCO, THURSDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 19, 1896. PRICE FIVE CENTS.

STRANGE CRAFT OF THE SKY

Sacramento Men Describe the Airship.

Claim They Saw Its Occupants and Heard Them in Conversation.

SACRAMENTO, CAL., Nov. 18.—The one topic of conversation in this city to-day has been the reported appearance of an airship over the eastern portion of Sacramento last night. While there are hundreds of people who, failing to catch a glimpse of this mysterious visitant, are extremely skeptical, there are hundreds of others who are positive in their declaration that they did see its brilliant searchlight traveling over the city, and who will also swear that they heard the voices of its occupants and distinguished their merry song and laughter. Then there are others who declare that these aerial travelers used the English tongue, and that they plainly distinguished the words used and commands uttered for the guidance and care of the air vessel.

In investigating this mysterious visitation the local representative of THE CALL obtained personal interviews with scores of reputable citizens who reside along the route passed over by the air craft. Many of them lived fully a mile or two distant from each other, but their accounts all agree.

As far as can be learned from eye-witnesses, the body of the craft was oblong and egg-shaped, with fan-like wheels on either side, whose rapid revolutions, beating the air, served to propel the vessel directly against the wind, and in so doing caused the vessel to sway from side to side with a wavering motion, similar to that of a boat being forced against the rapid current of a stream.

Midway of the vessel and suspended directly beneath it was a brilliant searchlight about twice the size of an arc light, evidently so placed that the occupants could ascertain when the vessel approached too near the earth and was in danger of collision with lofty objects. Above the egg-shaped body towered a tall, indistinguishable mass, whose shape it was impossible to ascertain, owing to the fact that the onlooker's eyes were blurred by the brilliancy of the searchlight.

Such is the description of the vessel given by R. L. Lowry, who also claims to have been able to distinguish four men, who were seemingly engaged in propelling the vessel by its fanlike wheels, much after the fashion of a bicyclist driving his wheel over a boulevard. It is also claimed that a bystander in the vicinity of Mr. Lowry shouted to the men in the aerial vessel and inquired their destination, and that they replied they were bound for San Francisco and intended arriving by 12 o'clock—midnight. This, however, could not be verified, as no one appeared to know the name of the reputed interrogator.

J. H. Vogel, who claimed to have been in the same locality, also states that the vessel was egg-shaped, and that he distinctly heard the voices of its occupants, but says that as the vessel was rapidly rising he was unable to distinguish any words, and that after a brief glimpse of the body of the airship it faded from view and all that was visible was the brilliant searchlight, which moved slowly away in a southwesterly direction, going toward San Francisco, and being visible for upward of thirty minutes, growing more and more dim, until it disappeared in the distance.

E. Wenzel, who is employed at Scheld's Brewery, verifies the stories of Vogel and Lowry as to the shape of the vessel, but claims that when it passed over him the occupants were trolling a merry chorus, which, though distant, sounded sweet and clear in the evening air.

The first person who, as far as can be learned, caught a glimpse of the reputed airship was David Carl, a horse-trainer at Agricultural Park. When he first caught sight of the craft it was within a short distance of the ground, and he states that he heard a voice saying:

"We are too low down here; send her up higher."

Then a discussion followed as to the advisability of attaining too great a height, as the occupants were evidently anxious to reach San Francisco before midnight. He stated that the vessel then started to rise, doing so on an incline and not going directly up as would be the case had ballast been cast from a balloon. He had no, idea, however, that it was anything but a balloon and had never even thought of the possibility of an airship. He was positive in his declaration that it contained at least two occupants, as he could clearly distinguish two voices discussing the strata of air best adapted for rapid traveling.

T. P. de Long when interviewed said: "I could not distinguish the shape of the vessel. All I could see was a brilliant light moving seemingly against the wind, but I could plainly hear the voices of its occupants, who were singing, and it sounded to me like the noise produced by a phonograph. At this time I should judge the vessel was several hundred feet high."

Frank Ross, assistant superintendent of the electric streetcar system, when interviewed said: "I did not see the form of the vessel nor did I hear the voices of its occupants, as I was not informed until it had passed my residence. All that I saw was a brilliant electric searchlight, apparently twice the size and power of an ordinary arc light, which was being propelled through the air by some mysterious force. From what I have learned from my employes—men of undoubted veracity—I am certain that this can by no possibility have been a 'fake,' but that a genuine airship passed over the city last evening. I watched the light until it passed out of sight thirty minutes later. It was traveling unevenly toward the southwest, dropping now nearer to the earth and now suddenly rising into the air again as if the force that was whirling it through space was sensible of the danger of collision with objects upon the earth. I, of course, have no idea as to its destination or purpose. I can only say that I am fully convinced by what I have heard that it was something out of the ordinary."

G. C. Snyder, foreman of the streetcar barn, states: "I am fully convinced that an aerial vessel of some description passed over this building last night about 6:30 o'clock. At the time my attention was called to it the craft was at too great an elevation for me to distinguish its form, but I distinctly saw the searchlight, which was going directly into the wind, and from its movement judged that it was attached to a vessel of some description, which was laboring as a seagoing vessel will in a heavy sea and head wind. I also find that hundreds of the residents in this portion of the city saw the light, and there are hundreds who claim that they heard the voices of the occupants of the visitor."

Charles Lusk, secretary of the company, also states that he saw the light traveling over the city.

Mayor Hubbard says that personally he failed to catch a glimpse of this aerial visitant, as he was engaged in his office downtown when it passed over, but he stated to THE CALL representative that upon arriving at his residence in the upper portion of the city his daughter told him that she had seen a brilliant white light, seemingly at a great elevation, which had come toward the city from the east and passed directly over it, moving in a southwesterly direction. She said it certainly was not a meteor, as it was a different shade of light and moved too slowly and unevenly, and she was at a loss to account for it.

F. E. Briggs, a motorman on one of the streetcars running to Oak Park, saw the light of the traveling airship, and at the request of the occupants of his crowded vehicle he stopped his car for a moment. He says that while they could not discern the form of the airship, yet the voices of the occupants were plainly heard. He had been informed by a man who resided in the vicinity of East Park, where the air vessel had been first seen, that it was a genuine airship, cigar or egg shaped, and that it had at least four occupants. When the vessel passed over his car he judged that the occupants were singing, but they were at such a height that neither he nor his passengers were enabled to distinguish the words or the tune, as they came in broken snatches, as though borne on gusts of the night wind.

When H. W. Marsh saw the traveling light it was at least five miles away. He thought that it was attached to some aerial vessel, owing to its wavering motion through the atmosphere.

E. Caverly saw the light, but refused to be interviewed on the subject, evidently deeming it to be uncanny.

M. T. Shelly, a gentleman of undoubted veracity, saw the airship's light, and at one time, when the craft careened somewhat so as to partially obscure the light, he caught sight of the vessel itself, which he declared to be a cigar-shaped receptacle, with what seemed to be a dark wall above it.

Hundreds of similar interviews could be obtained. In this connection the Evening Bee publishes the following account:

Startled citizens last night living at points of the city along a rough diagonal line, yet far distant from each other, declare that they not only saw the phenomenon but they also heard voices issuing from it in midair—not the whispering of angels, not the sepulchral mutterings of evil spirits, but the intelligible words and the merry laughter of humans. At those intervals where the glittering object, as if careless of its obligation to maintain a straightforward course, descended dangerously near the housetops voices were heard in the sky saying:

"'Lift her up, quick; you are making directly for that steeple.'

"Then the light in the sky would be seen obeying some mystic touch and ascending to a considerable height, from which it would take up again its southwesterly course. The light sailed along the line of K street, so it appeared from those in the eastern part of the city, although it appears that after it had passed Fourteenth street it was wafted far south of K. Laughter and words sounding strange in the distance, though fairly intelligible, fell upon the ears of pedestrians along the course of the light who had paused to look up at the novelty.

"Last night's Bee contained a telegram from New York announcing that a man had perfected an airship and would on Friday of this week, accompanied by one or two friends, ascend from a vacant lot in the metropolis and go directly to California, which he promised to reach in two days. The description furnished in the telegram included an apparatus which was electrical, to supply light and power for the astonishing contrivance.

"It is not regarded as likely, in view of the announcement contained in the dispatch, that last night Sacramento was overswept by this aerial ship.

"But here is the incident—here the chronicle of words heard, of a strange spectacle witnessed. Whence the light, which was not a meteor all agree, came, whither it went, where it now is—these things it is not within the capacity of this article to deal with."

Then follow interviews similar to those obtained by THE CALL representative.

Among the eye-witnesses of last night's singular spectacle the wildest speculations are rife. As to the destination and object to be obtained by this night voyage of a reputed airship, one of these onlookers informed THE CALL representative that in his opinion it was the same invention which it is rumored Edison claimed to have perfected and offered to the Government at the time when the Venezuelan boundary question came up, and that now that relations were strained with Spain the Government has sent a party of engineers out in the airship to test its practicability, and that they were keeping away from populous localities, except during the night trips.

The opinion of the masses is, however, that some lucky inventor, having solved the mystery of aerial navigation, is, with his companions, testing his invention in secret, with no intent of allowing a curious public to view it until his rights are fully protected by letters patent. They presume that he is traveling by night and laying by in desert spots during the day. Be that as it may, there can be no possible doubt that an aerial vessel of some kind passed over Sacramento last night, and hundreds of the residents of this city will so testify.

The residents of Oak Park claim to have a little mystery of their own which may possible bearing of this subject. They state that yesterday afternoon an object was seen in the sky at such a great elevation as to be almost indistinguishable. It moved slowly in a circle, leaving a volume of smoke behind it. This phenomenon was seen by many, who are unable to account for it.

A rumor is afloat in the city to-night that the airship was constructed near this city and that a trial trip was attempted last evening, a cable being used to confine the machine to a certain elevation.

It is stated that the cable parted and the vessel then drifted over the city and became the observed of all observers. This rumor cannot be confirmed at this late hour, but it is claimed that T. Allen, who formerly conducted an employment office in this city, states that such is the case and that one of the men who had made the ascension had informed him that the trial was a success and the vessel worked well, except that it was impossible to fully control its movements. In consequence the inventors had, after going toward San Francisco aways, returned and landed in a vacant field some distance from Arcade and about six miles from the city limits. This tale is not generally credited.

SEEN THREE WEEKS AGO.

Story Told by a Hunter Living on Bolinas Ridge.

On Sunday, the first day of this month, a representative of THE CALL met on Bolinas Ridge, just to the west of Mount Tamalpais, an old hunter living there, named Brown. The old man was very nervous and started a conversation immediately by asking:

"Do I look like a crazy man?"

"Why certainly not, Mr. Brown. Why do you ask?"

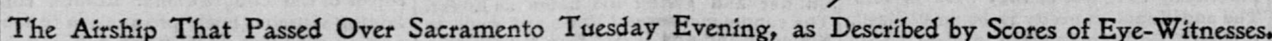
"Well," he replied, "I don't expect anybody to believe me. To tell the truth I can hardly believe myself. But it's an honest fact that yesterday morning, when the fog began to lift, I saw an airship right up there a couple of hundred feet over them pines.

"No, I can't tell you much what she looked like. She didn't show very plainly through the mist, but I saw a large, dark shape with something moving on it. Don't know whether I saw any people or not. It came on me so sudden I was almost stunned, and by the time I collected my senses she was out of sight.

"I have been kind of dazed ever since, and to have you tell me that I don't look crazy is a great relief. But I know that what I saw was an airship."

As the "superior" type of mirage is not uncommon to people living on the Marin hills it was thought that this was what the old man had seen, so no attention was paid to his story. The mirage effect of a large ocean vessel passing through the sky might appear to him like some new-fangled machine for navigating the air.

Perhaps the mirage is what he really saw, but in the face of the stories circulated in regard to the airship there is a probability that is what Mr. Brown really saw. Certainly he would have no object in telling such a story.



The Airship That Passed Over Sacramento Tuesday Evening, as Described by Scores of Eye-Witnesses.

LOST ON THE IRISH COAST

British Steamer Memphis Guided to Destruction During a Fog.

Ten of the Passengers and Crew Lose Their Lives in a Heavy Sea.

Drenched by High Waves, Some Fall From Their Stations in the Rigging.

LONDON, ENG., Nov. 18.—The British steamer Memphis, Captain Williams, which sailed from Montreal on November 4 for Bristol, was wrecked in Dunlough Bay, near Mizzenhead, on the south coast of Ireland, last night and ten of those on board of her lost their lives. The Memphis struck at 10 o'clock, during the prevalence of a dense fog. At the time of the accident the steamer was proceeding cautiously, blowing her whistle continuously and keeping a sharp lookout for the Mizzenhead and Browhead lights, which the thickness of the weather prevented her from making out.

As soon as she struck the rocks the vessel began to fill and rockets were immediately fired for the purpose of summoning assistance from the shore. Three of the ship's boats were quickly launched, but one of them was shattered by being dashed against the side of the steamer and two of the occupants were drowned.

The others succeeded in reaching the rocks along the shore, but five were washed away and drowned, their companions being unable to render them the slightest assistance.

Those of the crew who had taken to the rigging soon after the steamer struck experienced an awful night. They were constantly drenched by the heavy seas which washed over them, and some of them, after hard fighting for their lives, dropped from their places and were carried away.

The rockets sent up by the steamer's crew were seen by the coast guard, but the latter were unable to communicate with the shipwrecked men until after daybreak, when all who remained in the rigging were taken off by means of a line conveyed to the steamer by the rocket apparatus of the life-savers. The rescued persons immediately upon reaching the shore were taken to various farmhouses in the vicinity, where they were kindly cared for by the inmates.

Many of them were almost naked, but were supplied with sufficient clothing to enable them to proceed to Crookhaven, at which place most of them now are.

The steamer is a total wreck and much of her cargo is being washed ashore. The coast guard are engaged in the work of salvage. All the survivors pay a high tribute to Captain Williams for his efforts to secure the safety of those on board the vessel.

The Memphis was 3191 tons register, 345 feet long, 41 feet beam and 26 feet depth of hold. She was built at Belfast, Ireland, in 1890, and was owned by the African Steamship Company of London.

INITIATION LEADS TO DEATH.

A Prominent Citizen of Iowa Succumbs to Injuries Received in an Elk Lodge Ceremony.

DES MOINES, IOWA, Nov. 18.—E. W. Curry, chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee, died to-day in his room at the Hotel Savoy. The death was a direct result of injuries received while being initiated into Des Moines Lodge of Elks about two months ago. As part of the ceremony he was blindfolded and placed on a chair with an iron seat. Then a lighted lamp was placed under the seat, with the expectation that when it got too hot he would jump. But he sat still until he was badly burned. His trousers were burned away and the flesh fearfully scorched.

He was put in new clothes, and did not realize at the time that the injuries were serious. In a few days blood-poisoning set in and he grew worse steadily. It was his desire that the real cause of his injuries should not be made public, and another cause was assigned for the illness, the truth only becoming public to-day.

An evening paper published a highly sensational story that the injuries were caused by placing him, in the process in the initiation ceremony, in an electrical chair and turning on a current which burned him badly, but this is denied by the Elks.

Mr. Curry lived at Leon and was a leading attorney. The body will be taken there to-morrow by a large escort of Elks and Masons, and the funeral will be held to-morrow afternoon.

PECULIAR CASE OF HYPNOTISM.

A Young Girl Induced to Sign Important Papers and Then Elopes With Her Svengali.

CHICAGO, ILL., Nov. 18.—A peculiar case was presented to Judge Grosscup in the United States court to-day in affidavits and petitions. Six months ago Miss Emma Cox, one of the heirs of the late John Cox of Button County, Ohio, filed a suit for accounting against Dr. R. C. Reed, formerly of Cincinnati and now living in Los Angeles. The girl's mother, Mrs. T. A. Cox, alleged in an affidavit filed to-day that her daughter had been unduly influenced to sign a petition for dismissal of the suit by Charles C. Bishop of Elgin, Ill., and his mother, a clairvoyant of this city, who had exerted hypnotic power over the girl, who is quite young. The wife of Charles C. Bishop also presented an affidavit reciting that he left their home a month ago and had been in the company of Emma Cox since then, and that she believes the couple are now in Buffalo, where they went with money furnished by Dr. Reed.

The petition signed by Miss Cox is sworn to before Orrisa Bishop, a notary, who is father of the man whom the girl is alleged to have eloped with to Buffalo. Since coming of age Miss Cox has been living at the Bishop home, and a few days ago disappeared. Mrs. Cox resisted the dismissal of her daughter's suit, and Judge Grosscup said he would give the girl time to recover her mind and make an explanation if she had signed the release in a weak mental condition.

FATAL FLORIDA FUNCTION.

In a Row at a Country Dance One Man Is Mortally Shot and Two Others Badly Wounded.

NEW YORK, N. Y., Nov. 18.—A Herald special from Ocala, Fla., says: While a dance was in progress Monday night at the home of John Baggett, six miles north of here, Noah Wilson and his son John had a quarrel with the brother of a girl whom they insulted.

The Wilsons finally drew their pistols and opened fire, shooting down Joseph Howell, Nelson Howell and George Avery. Nelson Howell, who was shot three times, is mortally wounded. The other two men are badly wounded, but have a chance to recover.

After the Wilsons had emptied their pistols they drew knives and threatened to kill any one who molested them. They then started to leave when John Wilson was seized by Mamie Avery, sister of one of the men who was shot. With a vicious slash of his knife Wilson gashed the face of the girl in a horrible manner and she fell fainting to the floor.

The Wilsons then fled and have not yet been captured, though the whole country is aroused and posses of determined citizens are in pursuit. The fugitives are desperate men and have been in many rows in this county. They will not surrender without a desperate fight, for they know that if taken alive they will probably be lynched.

SLOW REFORM IN TURKEY.

None of the Demands of the Powers Carried Into Execution.

LONDON, ENG., Nov. 18.—The Daily News to-morrow will publish a Constantinople dispatch saying that Sir Philip W. Currie, the British Embassador to Turkey, has been instructed in regard to the request of the Porte that negotiations for commercial treaties be pushed to take no action in the matter until the more important matters have been disposed of. This course, the dispatch adds, is typical of the general attitude of the foreign powers toward the Turkish Government.

Advices received in Constantinople from all parts of Asia Minor say that business everywhere is stagnant and that great distress prevails. Nobody in Constantinople, according to the news advices, is aware that the reforms adopted by the powers and agreed to by the Turkish authorities have been carried into execution.

SENOR CASTILLO'S DEFIANCE

Utters a Threat Against This Government.

Says Spain Will Brook No Interference on Behalf of the Cubans.

PARIS, FRANCE, Nov. 18.—The Journal publishes a report of an interview with Senor Canovas del Castillo, Prime Minister of Spain, in which he says the relations between Spain and the United States are excellent. The United States Government, the Premier says, always observed a correct attitude, and he does not believe it will change its policy for the sake of Cuban negroes and adventurers.

If, however, the United States Government should do so Spain would cause her rights to be respected. While in power, Senor Castillo is reported as saying, he will make no concession to the rebels, nor will he show the weakness of drawing back before anybody. Spain, the Premier added, regards the Cuban question as one of international politics.

SPANISH BRUTALITY.

Story of Barbarous Treatment Told by Recent Prisoners.

NEW YORK, N. Y., Nov. 18.—The thirteen shipwrecked seamen of the steamer Coila, who were brought to this port Monday by the steamship Yucatan from Havana, continued to be very bitter in their denunciation of Spanish officers in Cuba, and, in fact, everything Spanish, when they appeared before the British Consul in order to get their discharge and tickets to their respective homes.

Jacob Moore, colored, who shipped on board the Coila as an apprentice, told the story of the cruel way he had been treated during his stay in Cuba.

He said that after the Coila had almost reached Havana and began to sink so rapidly that it was thought best to abandon her, which was done at 6 o'clock on the night of November 4, the entire crew put out in the ship's boats, and after rowing several hours reached the River Ganiquanice, Cuba. At a town at the river's mouth they were fairly treated.

The following day they were taken to Port Mariel under guard of a troop of Spanish cavalry and thrown into prison there. They were all huddled into a small cell and were compelled to sleep on the concrete flooring, not being allowed to use their ditty-bags as headrests, nor were they allowed to get the most necessary toilet articles. Spanish soldiers were on guard outside of the cell door day and night and watched their every movement.

The day following their imprisonment young Moore was sent for by the official in command and asked whether he could speak Spanish. He gave a room full of officers to understand as best he could that he did not comprehend their language, whereupon one of them felled him to the ground by a blow on the ear with the butt of his revolver. John de Lorrey here took up up the thread of the story.

"After they had knocked the senses out of Moore," he said, "and while he was regaining consciousness, they sent for me. The first question they put to me was: 'Are you an Englishman or an American?' I told them I was an Englishman, whereupon one of them said: 'You lie, dog of an American,' and struck me over the head with a cane. I was then given to understand by motions that I was to have my throat cut and then shot.

"I had almost persuaded them that I was an Englishman, when they discovered an American flag which I had tattooed on my left hand. This acted on them like a red flag to a bull, and they sprang upon me and struck me repeatedly in the face.

"They then called in a squad of soldiers, who were given some orders, upon receiving which they all pointed their guns at me. I told them that I was an Englishman and desired them to fire. This seemed to cool their ardor, and Moore, who had by this time come to his senses, was again brought before them.

"They pointed guns at him and pricked his flesh with the ends of their swords until he cried in agony.

"After about two hours of this treatment they allowed us to go back to our cells.

"When I told our Consul in Havana of the treatment we had been subjected to he fold us that really it was not anything out of the common and not worth bothering about. He told me, however, not to say anything about the matter when I reached the States, as those Americans have so much to say."

Ten of the shipwrecked men will be sent by the British Consul to their homes in Canada. Moore will be returned to Jamaica. David Burns went to his home in Brooklyn and Joseph Yuhl will remain in New York.

FILIBUSTERS ON TRIAL.

James Quinn, a Pinkerton Spy, Testifies Against Them.

NEW YORK, N. Y., Nov. 18.—The trial of Colonel Emilio Nunez and Captain Charles B. Dickan upon a charge of having engaged in a filibustering expedition in May last began in earnest in the United States Criminal Court this morning. District Attorney Macfarlane opened for the prosecution. He insisted upon the necessity of preventing expeditions against Spain being sent from this country if the United States desired to remain at peace with Spain, and emphasizing the fact that the verdict of the jury would be important.

When he had concluded Assistant District Astorney Hinnan offered in evidence President Cleveland's latest proclamation regarding the Cuban rebellion.

This was objected to by Mr. Rubens and was ruled out by the court on the ground that the proclamation was issued after the offense charged against the defendants was committed. A previous Presidential proclamation regarding Cuban rebellion was, however, admitted, and the examination of witnesses was then begun.

James Quinn, one of the party who sailed on the Laurada, was the chief witness, and detailed every movement of the party, which according to his testimony was a full-fledged military expedition. Quinn acknowledged that after reaching Cuba and going to President Cisneros' camp with the party, he obtained permission to return home, being allowed to reach Havana by permission of the Spanish general. The witness came to New York, Consul Fitzhugh Lee paying his passage. On cross-examination by General Tracy, witness admitted that he had solicited a letter from Cubans in Boston to enable him to sail on the Laurada.

"And so," said General Tracy, "you got this letter at your own request. You went to Cuba and you are now here testifying against the Cubans?"

In the direct examination the witness referred to the letter he had received from Cisneros and it was offered in evidence:

James Quinn: I hope you will never forget that Cuba needs the help of every man that loves liberty. Your affectionate

SALVATOR CISNEROS.

San Blas, August 1, 1896.

Under redirect examination the witness said he had gone to Cuba with every intention of acting right by the Cubans. "But they did not act right by me, and that is the reason I came home," he said. He also testified that he had never seen District Attorney McFarlane before to-day and had not gone to Cuba as a spy.

The witness admitted under cross-examination that he expected to get money from the Pinkertons and that he had already received about $50 from them. He also acknowledged that he had a grudge against the owners of the Laurada and wanted to get even with them.

At the conclusion of the cross-examination court was adjourned.

WEYLER'S MOVEMENTS.

Reports That He Will Shortly Return to Havana.

KEY WEST, FLA., Nov. 18.—Advices received in Havana from Arlemisia state that Weyler was expected to arrive at Cayajabar to-day. A parlor-car plated with iron is waiting for him at Arlemisia. The insurgents are reported in force near Cienaga, the leading military authorities being in command.

General Arolas believes the time has not yet arrived for large operations and that it is necessary to wait for cooler weather to improve the sanitary conditions. It is believed Weyler has the same opinion and has announced his intention to return to Havana.

The insurgent leaders Perico Diaz and Perico Delgado are reported hard pressed by the Spaniards. They have asked Maceo for re-enforcements, but they were told it was impossible to do anything for them and they must do the best they could. It is thought that Maceo will attack the trocha.

It is reported Weyler will return to Havana inside of three or four days.

SLIGHT SKIRMISHES.

Engagements in Which but Few Are Killed or Wounded.

HAVANA, CUBA, Nov. 18.—Colonel Moncado has had an engagement with the combined parties of rebels who were found strongly intrenched in the Grillo hills in the province of Havana. The enemy were dislodged and dispersed, the Spanish column advancing and capturing the position of the rebels under a heavy fire. The Spanish troops had six privates killed and a corporal, two lieutenants and thirty-eight privates wounded. The rebels left seven dead on the field and carried off many others. General Gonzales has had two engagements with the rebel parties between Silo Hondo and San Christobal in Pinar del Rio province. The Spanish had a private and one corporal killed and twenty-seven privates wounded. The insurgents had twelve men killed.

SPAIN'S NEW LOAN.

A Considerable Sum to Be Expended in Repairing Warships.

MADRID, SPAIN, Nov. 18.—The Cabinet has accepted the bonds of 400,000,000 pesetas, representing the total amount of the new Spanish loan authorized by the Queen Regent, and the bonds already subscribed for 250,000,000 pesetas will be allotted pro rata. The sum of 7,250,000 pesetas derived from the loan will be allotted for the purpose of repairing warships. The Cabinet, at its meeting yesterday, passed a resolution of thanks to the country for the generous and patriotic manner in which the people subscribed to the new loan.

Rumors That Weyler Has Resigned.

NEW YORK, N. Y., Nov. 18.—Rumors are current here to-night that General Weyler has resigned as captain-general of the Spanish army in Cuba. A private dispatch received to-night says:

General Weyler has resigned. General Prando has been named by the Government as his successor.

PRINCE LOBANOFF'S SUCCESSOR.

Count Vorontzoff-Daskoff Tendered the Office by the Czar.

LONDON, ENG., Nov. 18.—The Daily Chronicle will publish to-morrow a dispatch from St. Petersburg announcing definitely that the Czar had invited General Count Vorontzoff-Dashkoff, Minister of the Imperial House and Imperial Domains, to succeed the late Prince Lobanoff-Rostovsky in the office of Minister of Foreign Affairs. The dispatch adds that it is understood that Count Vorontzoff-Daskoff will accept the position.

The San Francisco Call

VOLUME LXXX.—NO. 176. SAN FRANCISCO, MONDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 23, 1896. PRICE FIVE CENTS.

A WINGED SHIP IN THE SKY.

It Cleaves the Air With Pinions Like a Huge Condor.

ALL SACRAMENTO SEES THE NEW WONDER.

The Inventor's Lawyer Describes the Machine and Says It Is Genuine.

IT WAS SEEN SOARING NEAR SAN JOSE AT MIDNIGHT.

"The Call's" Exclusive Account of the Greatest Invention of the Age Is Now Corroborated by Thousands.

For several days there have been persistent reports that a huge airship has been seen in the vicinity of Oakland, Sacramento and San Francisco. THE CALL has contained daily and exclusive accounts of the appearance, and now there is an avalanche of testimony to the effect that many persons of truthful reputations have seen something like a huge seraph in the air, spreading its electric pinions and soaring faster than a giant condor of the Andes. So numerous have been the reports that the possibility of aerial navigation is now the absorbing theme of the day.

There is now a vast amount of corroborative testimony to the effect that there is a practical airship afloat in the azure spaces hereabouts, and the meaning of this testimony has been made clear by the positive statement of Attorney George D Collins of Alameda that he has a wealthy client who is the inventor of the great aerial ship, and that it will soon be known to the entire world.

The ship was seen in Sacramento last night, and the evidence is increasing that the same great propeller recently passed through the heavens over Oakland and San Francisco.

The positive testimony of Collins that the airship is a reality has now been signally corroborated by the testimony of thousands of citizens of Sacramento who saw the great ship in the air last night. The following accounts from Oakland and Sacramento make the matter as clear as ordinary human testimony could do.

One of the most interesting of the corroborative stories comes from Thomas Jordan of San Rafael, who states that he found a machine-shop in a mountain fastness some months ago; that six men were working on an airship and that it would soon be completed.

In the first day's story of the airship, as printed in THE CALL, it was stated that an old hunter named Brown of Bolinas Ridge had seen an airship floating a few hundred feet above the pine trees one morning just as the fogs were lifting from the ridge.

COLLINS' EVIDENCE IN.

He Knows the Inventor of the Ship.

OAKLAND, CAL., Nov. 22.—Attorney Collins was the busiest man in Alameda County to-day. During the first part of the day all his efforts were directed to keeping away from the curious throng that wished to talk to him and interview him and try to induce him to describe and draw pictures of the Oroville millionaire's airship. Not until late in the evening could he be induced to go into the parlor of his home on Union street, Alameda, and tell what he knew of the invention that has startled not only this State, but the entire country.

"A few weeks ago," said Mr. Collins, "I came from Washington, whither I had been on important business. On my arrival in this State I met a gentleman who introduced himself to me, and when I told him where I had been he immediately said he was very sorry that he had not met me prior to my departure, as he had some important business to transact at the Patent Office in Washington which he would not trust in the mail or by any other means than a trusted servant.

"I asked him what his business consisted of, but beyond telling me that he was an inventor, I got no further details from him at that time. He told me enough in an indirect manner to convince me that he was a man who had a secret that he evidently cherished dearly, but he enlightened me no further, and beyond exchanging cards, our acquaintanceship developed nothing more till later. A few days afterward he called on me at my office in San Francisco, but as he did not talk about business, I concluded that he had merely paid me a social call. I became greatly interested in that inventon. I could not help noticing that there was a desire on his part to tell me more than I knew, and I could also see that he restrained himself from doing so. He called on me a second time, chatted about a few immaterial matters and departed, leaving me in wonder as to when he would confide anything further to me. Altogether, he made about half a dozen of these visits, and I concluded that he really did intend to talk business every time he came, but that his courage failed him as soon as he got in the office.

"Finally he got up courage enough to tell me he was not only an inventor but that he really had an invention. He asked me if he could place confidence in me. I replied, 'Do you mean as a friend or as an attorney?' He said, 'As both.' I told him that I could not recall any occasion in which I had violated a friend's or a client's confidence and that I thought I was fully capable of attending to any business he might wish me to transact for him. He said that if his secret were made public prematurely it would mean the loss to him of an immense fortune. He further assured me that it was an invention that anybody would willingly steal if they had the opportunity. I talked to him for a little while and succeeded in assuring him that if such were the case I, as an attorney, would be just as anxious to protect his interests as he would be himself.

"I am telling you the details of my first meeting with this inventor because they carry with them a good idea of the nature of the man and also are evidence of his sincerity and belief in the practicability of his invention.

"He is a resident of Oroville and a man of wealth, about 47 years of age, and a fine looking fellow. He does not talk for five minutes without convincing his hearer that he is a man of more than ordinary intelligence. The first time he talked to me of his invention he got as far as the word airship; then I laughed, and laughed heartily.

"What kind of whisky have you been drinking?" I asked him.

This made him indignant, and had I laughed any longer he certainly would have got very angry and I should have most probably have lost a client.

"'I have not been drinking, sir,' he said, 'and when I do it is not whisky.'

"Even that answer did not assure me, and I again said, 'Have any members of your family ever been in the lunatic asylum?'

"He did not appreciate this any more than my other remark, and drawing himself to his full height and stamping one foot on the floor, he replied, 'No, sir, I am a man of business. I have come here on a business errand, and had I not met you previously and been convinced that I could trust you I think our acquaintance would end right here. However, I can excuse your surprise, for everybody believes that an inventor must naturally be crazy until he has proved that his invention is practicable. Then, I suppose, people call him a genius. I have got over the crazy stage, but I do not yet claim to be a genius; but I certainly am practical.'

"He then proceeded to tell me of his invention. He has been working for several years, and in order to avoid suspicion on the part of local people he has had all the machinery and material shipped from the East in such manner as not to excite curiosity.

"Of course I am informed regarding nearly all the details, but I am not at liberty to talk about them. As near as I can recollect the propelling power is produced by compressed air, which works the arms and also produces the light. There is in the airship a little motor of sufficient power to produce the brilliant light that everybody has seen. As soon as he told me this I hinted that it would be a good thing to make the matter public, but he refused, saying that publicity at that time would call attention to his work, would interfere with the progress of his caveat, and might prove the ruin of his enterprise. Now he is not so particular. He has informed me that it is sufficiently advanced for him to patent, and that he can take out successive patents for any other contrivance he may invent in order to make his machine perfect.

"The next time we met was quite recently and after the machine had been seen in various parts of the State. He told me that those fellows were right who talked to THE CALL reporter at Sacramento and were telling the truth. On the night that it was seen there he left Oroville in the afternoon, made a straight trip to Sacramento, which is about sixty miles, took a few turns over the Capitol, went off about fifty miles and descended. On that occasion he made sixty miles in forty-five minutes, but I understand that there is practically no limit to the speed which can be attained, provided the necessary machinery is made. I mean by this that the principle of the airship would almost admit of lightning speed, but that conditions that have to be met of course limit its power of resistance.

"I believe, however that in a very short time it will be able to make three miles in two minutes, and the inventor tells me that more is possible.

"The machine did pass over Oakland last Friday night. The inventor came from Oroville and descended near Haywards. I do not know where the machine is now, but I think all day yesterday it remained where it descended. The inventor is making trips every night and has been doing so for over two weeks, and any night the people look in the sky they are likely to see him. A week ago he told me that it was nearly perfect, with the exception of a little wavy motion, which produced the sensation very closely allied to seasickness. This he was confident of preventing, and apparently from what is reported he has made the necessary adjustment to insure smooth flying.

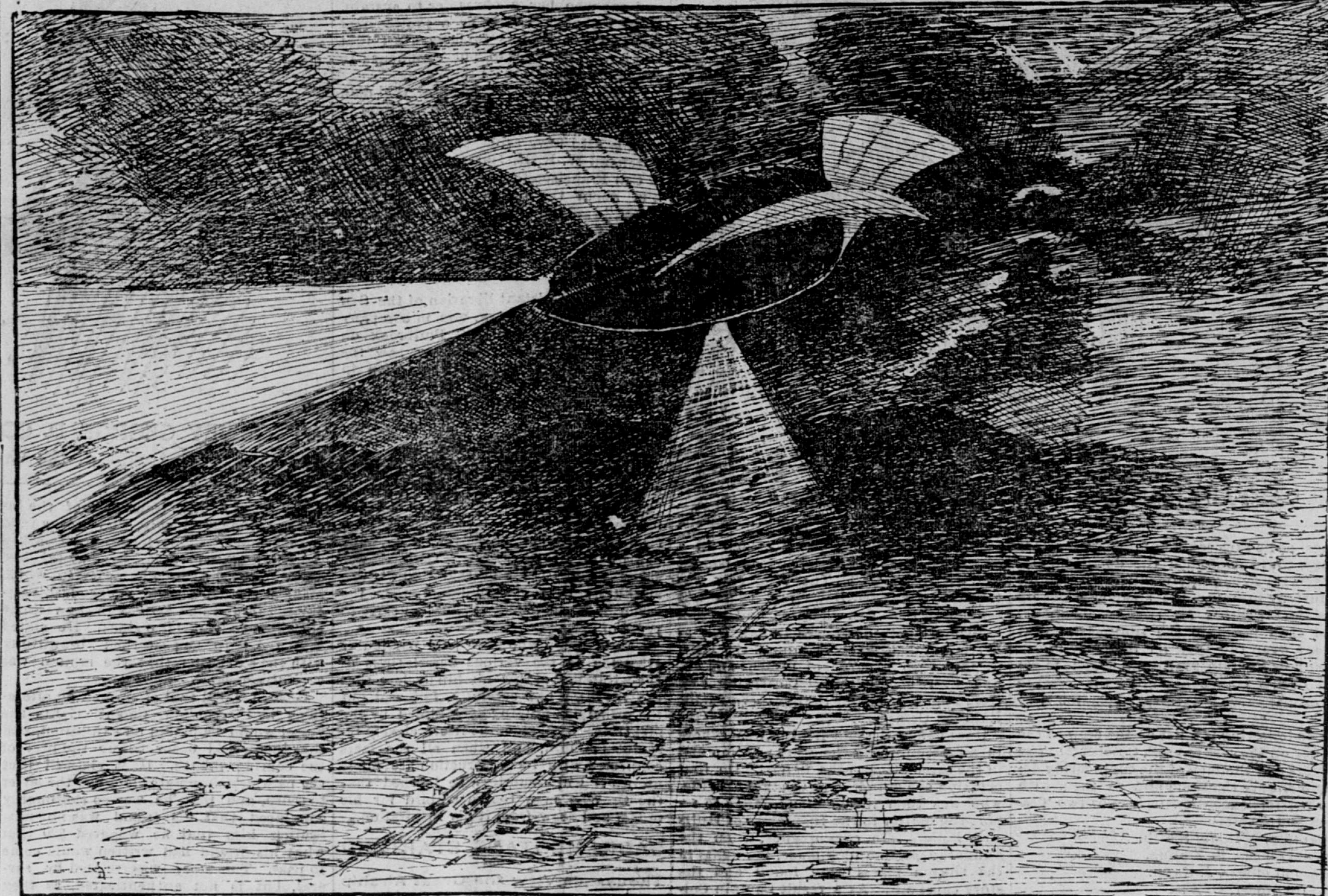
"From every quarter I have received reports during the past few days of this machine, and although there are many who may still be skeptical regarding what is claimed for it, I thoroughly believe that it is now perfect."

R. B. Mitchell of the firm of Pierson & Mitchell, San Francisco, called on Mr. Collins this evening to discuss the merits of the new invention. Mr. Mitchell had the idea when he called that Mr. Collins had the inventor hidden in his house for the purpose of keeping him from the public. Mr. Collins, how ver, denied this and said that he could not really give any information of the inventor's whereabouts.

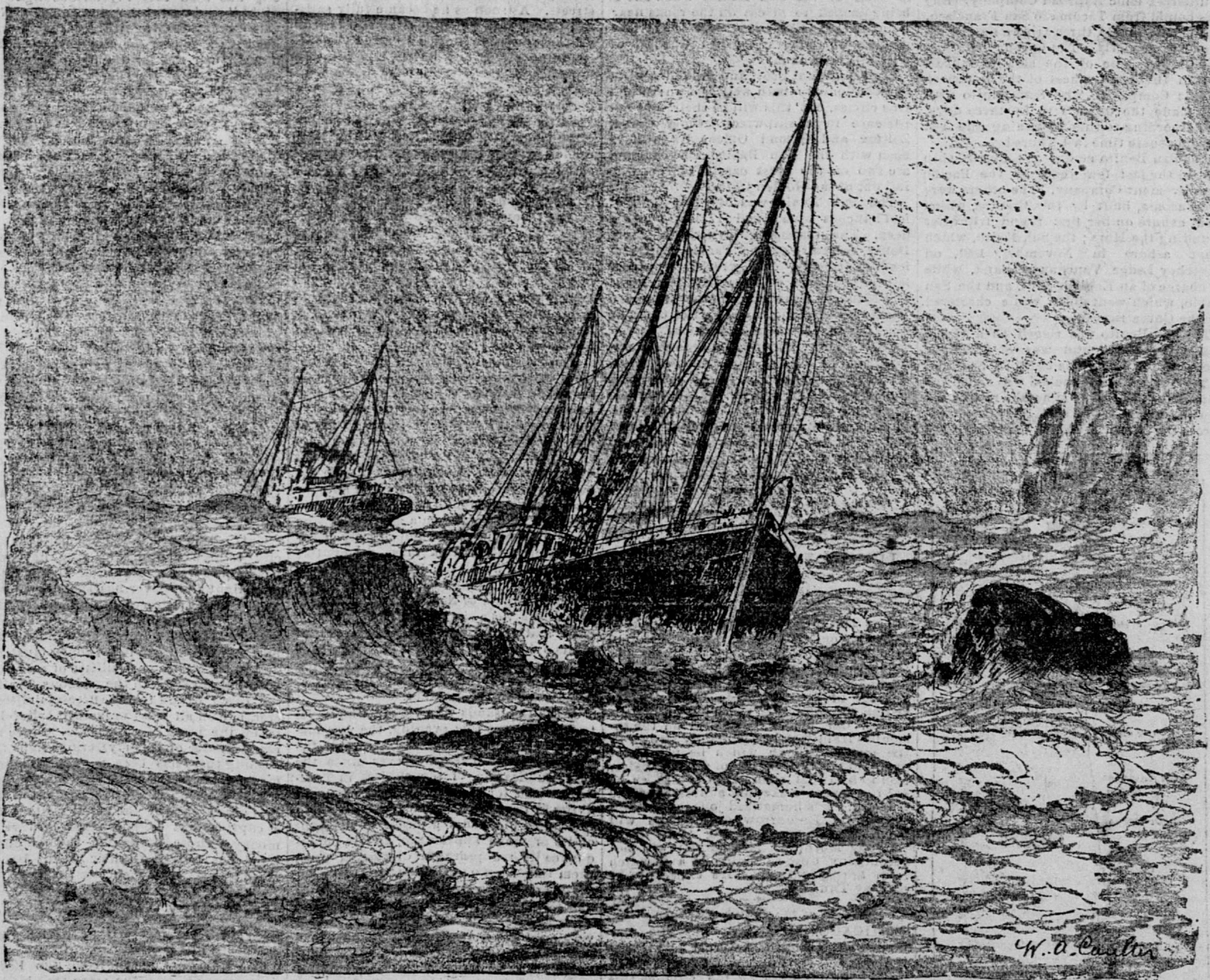
"I have no doubt," said Mr. Collins, "that if the night is at all pleasant the inventor is in his machine about half a mile over the earth startling some of the inhabitants of this State. To-morrow morning's papers may possibly inform you where he was at this time. I believe he has gone home, and if he has he certainly flew there."

Then Mr. Mitchell became very definite.

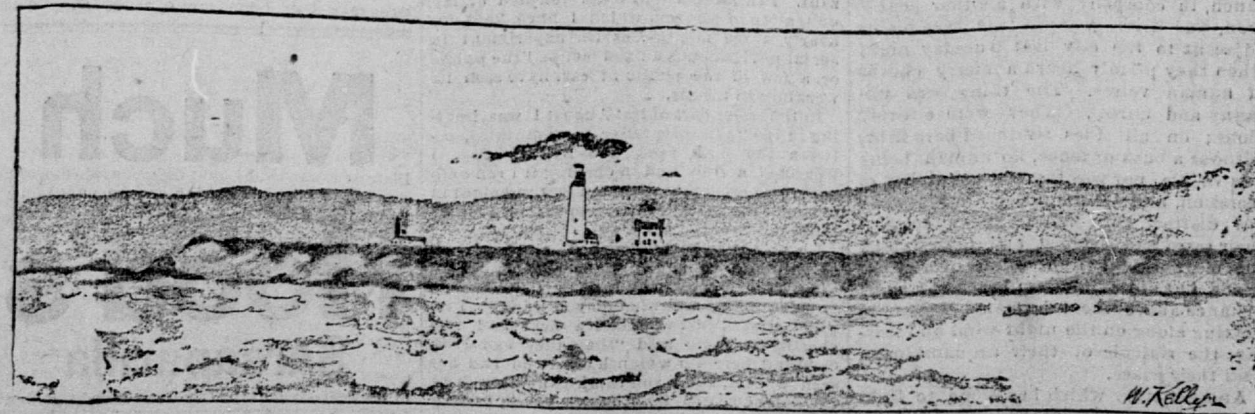
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The Great Airship That Is Startling the People of Many Cities. Drawn From Descriptions of the Inventor's Attorney, George D. Collins.



The Pacific Improvement Company's Steamer San Benito on the Rocks Two Miles North of Point Arena, and the Steam Schooner Point Arena Standing On and Off Ready to Lend Assistance. Chief Engineer Wood and Five Men Reached the Steam Schooner, but Captain Smith and 27 Men Had to Take to the Rigging of the San Benito. This Sketch Was Drawn From a Telegraphic Description of the Scene. Since Then, However, the Vessel Has Broken in Two.



The Point Arena Lighthouse, Near Which the Steamship San Benito Was Wrecked.

LOSS OF THE SAN BENITO

The Steamship Wrecked on the Beach Near Point Arena.

EIGHT MEMBERS OF THE CREW DROWNED.

Eleven Are Rescued and Twenty-Four Still Cling to the Rigging.

FUTILE ATTEMPTS TO EFFECT THEIR RESCUE.

Heavy Seas Break the Vessel in Twain and Sweep Over the Unfortunates.

POINT ARENA, CAL., Nov. 22.—The Pacific Improvement Company's steel screw steamship San Benito was driven ashore two miles north of the Point Arena light by a gale at 1 o'clock this morning. Eight of the crew were lost, eleven reached the shore and the rest, twent-four in number, are clinging to the rigging, swept each minute by the charging surf. The names of the known dead are:

O. W. SCOTT, first assistant engineer.
C. CONDON, second assistant engineer.
M. PENDERGAST, fireman.
M. SHERIDAN, messboy.

The steamer struck on the sand beach and after breaking in two the stern swung around and now lies about 500 feet from the beach, stern in shore. The forward part, on which the crew clings, lies broadside to the sea about 100 feet north of the afterpart of the ship and a little farther out.

Part of the men are in the rigging of the foremast and some are on the wheelhouse. The poor fellows in the rigging can be seen moving up and down in their efforts to keep warm, for they are kept wet by continual clouds of spray dashing upon them, and the cold north wind blowing on them would chill any one not a seaman in a very short time. The latest reports from the wreck are that the men are still hanging on and eagerly watching for the expected tug which they think will surely be sent by the owners of the vessel. The people on shore have built great fires from wood gathered on the beach, so a bright light is cast onto the wreck.

The San Benito, Captain Smith, left Tacoma on Wednesday afternoon with a cargo of 4000 tons of coal for San Francisco. It encountered head winds all the way down and the crew did not see land until Saturday. Then a heavy rain fell. They could not see any distance from the ship, but from the log believed they had passed Point Arena.

At 1 o'clock this morning the steamship struck suddenly north of Point Arena lighthouse and immediately blew its whistle for assistance. The surf was very high, seas breaking over the ship, which almost instantly broke in the middle, just back of the smokestack. The crew, in charge of First Assistant Engineer Scott, launched a boat containing nine men, but it was swamped immediately and only four reached the shore, nearly exhausted.

Three of the survivors started inland

San Francisco
The Call

VOLUME LXXX.—NO. 177. SAN FRANCISCO, TUESDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 24 1896. PRICE FIVE CENTS.

THE APPARITION OF THE AIR.

Oaklanders Say Its Frame Was Like the Body of a Bird.

ATTORNEY COLLINS' TALE SUPPORTED.

Another Lawyer Who Was Informed of the Alighting of the Flier.

MOVING LIGHTS ONCE MORE MYSTIFY THIS CITY.

Dr. Benjamin Disclaims the Invention—Mayor Sutro's Testimony and That of Other Reputable Citizens Offered.

Testimony concerning the existence of an airship which is supposed to be navigating the air over the bay cities by night and hiding from observation in some secluded place before daybreak came in yesterday from many sources. Many persons saw mysterious lights moving overhead. But the projectors of the phenomenon which has caused intense and general interest seem to revel in mystery.

Among those who yesterday told of seeing the lights carried about by an aeria visitor were Mayor Sutro, Colonel Menton, the excursion agent of the Southern Pacific Company; Samuel Foltz, advertising manager of THE CALL; Professor C. H. Murphy of the Polytechnic High School, also many others.

What they saw or heard from others who saw the moving light is told in the subjoined account. They all tell practically the same story, which is that the light appeared quite high overhead and that it moved very fast. They did not all observe it to be moving in the same direction.

Dr. Benjamin, who has been supposed to have invented a flying machine or airship, which is supposed to be the cause of the phenomena observed overhead during the past few nights, was in the City yesterday, and last evening was interviewed by THE CALL. Dr. Benjamin said that he did not know anything about the airship. At the same time he conceded that if he did know of such an invention of his own, he would consider it wise not to give any information concerning it until he had secured his patents. Dr. Benjamin said that Mr. Collins is his attorney, and admitted that he visited Mr. Collins yesterday afternoon. This, in connection with the fact that Mr. Collins admitted that he is attorney for a man who claims to have invented an airship, must be taken for what it is worth.

Concerning this mystery it should be clearly understood that THE CALL does not aver that an airship has been invented, nor does it deny that such is the fact. There is no intention on the part of THE CALL to deceive its readers. The statements which have been made by reputable citizens are given, and these will undoubtedly be carefully considered and the consensus of public opinion will place the true value upon the different circumstances. There are several theories to account for the mysterious moving light, which do not necessarily imply the existence of a flying machine or airship.

There is no doubt that many people firmly believe in the airship. There were many such who sat up late last night to watch for the appearance of such a vessel. Many stood on roofs and in other elevated places, in the rain, until late, hoping to get a glimpse of it. At the hour of going to press the whole matter remained a mystery.

Henry W. Bradley of the law firm of Stanly, Hayes & Bradley made a very interesting statement which will be widely read.

The most circumstantial story yet told came from Oakland last night. Passengers on a streetcar claim to have been attracted by the light overhead and looking upward they saw distinctly the outlines of an airship, which resembled a huge bird in its outlines and which seemed to rise and fall in its course. Many residents of Oakland say that they, also, discerned the outlines of the vessel.

BODY LIKE A BIRD.

What Spectators Across the Bay Say That They Saw.

OAKLAND, CAL., Nov. 23.—There is a general impression in this city that the airship which has been seen so often recently is being housed somewhere in Alameda County when it is not being tested by its inventor.

The whole population is about equally engaged between discussing the qualities of airships and looking at the sky expecting to see the winged machine parting the clouds Reports are continually being received of its being seen in the neighborhood of Berkeley and Haywards, as though the inventor were confining his experiments to the low land between the hills that skirt the northern boundary of the county and the bay. Several people saw the light over Haywards last night, and the number of people who have seen it in North Oakland is constantly increasing.

Last evening the conductor wearing badge No. 26 of the Alameda electric line reported seeing the affair over Fruitvale. He says it had a powerful headlight and there appeared to be several smaller lights on board.

Mayor Davie is a firm believer in the existence of the airship. "I doubted the story of those who declared they had seen it," said the Mayor to-day, "but when I looked through the names of the reputable people who unhesitatingly assert that they have seen it I doubt it no longer.

"I have always believed in the practicability of airships, and a few years ago old Dr. Freeling had a model that closely resembled the picture published of this invention, and he told me before he died that when aluminum was brought into use the secret of air-flying would be solved. I have no doubt that some one has built a machine, because many of those who have seen it are certainly entitled to credit."

Attorney A. A. Moore heard the story of the airship a few days ago. "I did not talk with Mr. Collins," he said, "but I was talking with a friend, an attorney, who told me that Collins had talked with him about a client who had invented an airship."

Last evening at about 7:30 o'clock the passengers on an Alameda car were startled by the sight of a brilliant stream of light high in the heavens off in the direction of Haywards. The passengers distinctly saw the outlines of an airship and watched its maneuvers high in the skies.

The ship resembles a huge bird in its outlines and seemed to rise and fall in its course. A light streamed from the head of the ship, throwing a white stream of light for several hundred yards. As the outlines of the airship were plainly discerned the passengers in the car became greatly excited. The phenomenon had first been noted by a man who had been idly watching the heavens. As soon as he perceived the light he attracted the attention of the other passengers and all intensely interested watched the peculiar machine as it made its way through the skies.

It was high in the heavens and appeared to be of huge size. When first seen it seemed to be floating over San Leandro. It moved rapidly, going at least twenty miles an hour. It shot across the skies in the northwest, then turned quickly and disappeared in the direction of Haywards. Not only was the airship seen by the passengers, but many other residents of this city distinctly saw the brilliant light and the huge, bird-like body floating in midair. None of the spectators were acquainted with each other, and yet their stories are startlingly similar, agreeing as to time, direction of the airship and description. These facts leave little doubts in the minds of many people that a successful airship has been invented, and is navigating the heavens.

Miss Wilson, a daughter of Captain Wilson of the police force, and her friend, Miss Hunter, are among those who viewed the strange sight. The two friends accompanied another young lady to the streetcar about 7 P. M. yesterday, where their attention was attracted by the peculiar light in the skies. The huge bird-like body from which the light emanated was clearly visible, and both young ladies are positive it was an airship. It followed the same course as described by the passenger on the Alameda car. Police Officer Carson and John Strickler, the flagman at Fourteenth and Broadway, also declare that they saw the airship.

"The representatives of the afternoon papers were almost hysterical in their demands that I discredit THE CALL'S interview. I wish to say right here that I have not a word to take back of all that has been reported. It was a truthful, reliable interview and THE CALL is the only paper that has reported me correctly. The stories in the evening papers that I had denied the interview were false and the writers actually told me that they were going to write such stuff before they left my office.

"Since the fact was published that I am the attorney for the inventor I have not seen my client. We mailed the papers regarding the patent to Washington last week and expect to hear soon of their arrival. I do not know when I shall see my client again, but I expect him any day. He is a man that impressed me with the idea of being perfectly able to manage his own affairs, and I have no doubt he knows what he is doing.

"I wish to correct one idea that seems to be prevalent. Some papers have published the fact that the inventor is an Oroville man. I have not said so. He is a San Francisco man, but he has constructed his machine near Oroville. I did say this afternoon to the reporters of the San Francisco evening papers that the story as published in the Chronicle was a fake. Not only that; I told the young fellow from the Chronicle that he had grossly misrepresented me in his interview where he quoted me as having said I saw the airship work, the inventor having come here, and, after talking to me a while, getting into it and moving away. The statement that I had seen it working at all is false.

"As I told you before, as I told him, and as I now repeat it, all I know is that I have been appealed to by a man who appears perfectly sound to act as his attorney in securing for him a patent on his invention. It would be presumptious for me to say the story that an airship was being worked about the bay was a fake, when it is taken into consideration the number of people who stake their reputation on having seen one. Even if it was not the ship of the man who came to see me, it is not for me to say that these people have not seen an airship. There is more than one man at work on the question of aerial navigation, and some one is bound to solve it as they did the steam-engine and the electric-car. I am as skeptical regarding the actual working of the craft as any one, but am not such a fool as to say that it is an impossibility.

"I was told in this city to-day that the Chronicle had secured a man—one Dr. Benjamin, I believe — to maintain throughout that the invention is his and that he is the one who has been going about the heavens at night. He is to say that he has paid me $500 as a retainer and that I am to have $1500 when the patents are issued. This is along the line of their story as first told, and it must be kept up at any cost. I desire to denounce the whole story in advance as a pure fake to support the wild imagination of one of their reporters. It places me in an unfair light before the public and injures my business to have such stories set afloat when there is not the least foundation for them.

"When the Examiner man came to me Sunday afternoon he told me that his paper had the whole story and knew the inventor and would publish it this morning. They did not particularly care, he said, for my version, but would like to have it just to verify what they knew. The bold bluff did not work and the story in to-day's Examiner trying to ridicule the affair, but at the same time leaving loopholes to escape, was the result

"There is no denying the fact that the public has been aroused to a high pitch of expectation by the reports published. The Examiner sent a man to me to-day who said they had treated the whole affair as a huge joke, but found that the people were looking at it in a serious manner and they were ready to give the news as received, regardless of how improbable it might look. He asked me to give a true account of the matter as far as I knew anything, but when I denied having seen the machine work or having ridden in it he laughed and said I was hedging."

IRVING M. SCOTT—"An airship? Of course not. That's the last cruiser I bid for and lost. I've been wondering ever since what became of it."

KNEW OF THE AIRSHIP.

Attorney H. W. Bradley Was Informed of Interesting Facts.

"I am at a loss to know how you could have ascertained that I know anything about the airship," said Henry W. Bradley of the law firm of Stanley, Hayes & Bradley, of this City, yesterday, to a representative of THE CALL.

"Do you know anything about it?"

Mr. Bradley hesitated a moment, then said: "The man you want to see is George A. Collins, the attorney. All I can say is that if Collins said what is accredited to him in a published interview this morning, Collins knows what he is talking about, and I will say, further, that Collins would scarcely take part in a fake story, because he would have more to lose than to gain by so doing.

"Now, there is that first publication in THE CALL about the airship. That undoubtedly was sent by telegraph from Sacramento after 1 o'clock in the morning, for it states it was after midnight that the object was seen over that city. Then there is McGovern at the California Hotel, who told me Saturday night that he saw it between 2 and 4 o'clock in the morning. I know that it landed at 3 o'clock—

"Where?"

"You have made me say more than I intended to," replied Mr. Bradley, with a look upon his countenance which seemed to say that he wished he had remained silent; then as a faint smile lighted up his features: "I cannot tell you where it landed; that is, I do not feel at liberty to state where. The man you want to see is Collins.

"You must understand that I cannot speak about this matter, but will say this: THE CALL has been consistent in this matter. It is on the right track and it must not back water; and then it got ahead of all the other papers on a big piece of news.

"Then there is A. L. Hart of Sacramento, who stated that if certain parties of that city declared that they had seen the object he believed what they said."

"Where is that wonderful and much-talked-about airship now?" was asked.

"That I cannot tell you, but I will say this: I was to have inspected it to-day, but for some reason the invitation I expected did not reach me; possibly because the premature announcement in THE CALL has interfered with projected plans, or it may be the weather.

"I wish to place myself right in this matter. While in conversation with a gentleman three or four days before the first publication of the airship story in THE CALL I was told that such an invention was in existence and the difficulty of navigating the sky would soon be overcome. The gentleman who gave me this information did so in confidence, a confidence that I will not betray. As an attorney I could not afford to do so and as a man I would not.

"There is another reason I have for not wishing to give expression to my knowledge or views, which is this: Several of the newspapers have published interviews with Mr. Collins and other papers have asserted that he denied the truth of the statements attributed to him. Now, it would not look well for me to make statements contradictory to his or have him deny statements that I made. Therefore, I will keep silent."

Mr. Bradley stated that he is in no way connected with the airship scheme, either as an attorney or as a friend to the parties most concerned.

"Do you believe that the existence of an airship at the present time is possible?" was asked.

Mr. Bradley smiled and cautiously answered: "Was the airship not seen by hundreds of respectable citizens in Sacramento, San Francisco, Oakland and other places? I would not presume to dispute their statements."

"Then you believe that we have such an invention that has proved a success?"

"Yes. I believe what my friends tell me. However, I am not an authority. All I know, that is, all I think I know, is from hearsay testimony, and I do not intend to commit myself upon hearsay testimony alone. I have never seen it, and I do not expect to make a trip in it as it has been reported."

SEEN LAST NIGHT.

Many Persons in This City Gazed Upward and Wondered.

The mysterious light was seen last night in this City by a gentleman of undoubted practical experience. Samuel Foltz, advertising manager of THE CALL, was looking out from his residence at 1157 Stanyan street about 9:15 P. M., when he noticed a light traveling in the direction of Berkeley. He at first thought he was dreaming, but looking again he called out the people residing in the house and all agreed that the light corresponded in appearance with that attributed to the mysterious flying ship.

Mr. Foltz said that the light was apparently that of an ordinary lamp; that it was located about 300 feet above the earth, and was, when sighted, above the locality of Van Ness avenue, and that it was traveling direct and with tremendous velocity toward Berkeley. The light remained in sight about four minutes, when it passed out of view.

C. H. Murphy, a teacher at the Polytechnic High School, told an interesting story last evening: "I was coming down Valencia street about 9:15 to-night," said Mr. Murphy, "and I noticed the phenomenon. Above, at an elevation of possibly 4000 feet, was an electric glow, which was moving toward the park at the rate of one mile per minute. This was observed by hundreds of persons. Every one on Valencia street might have seen it. There was only one light. This had a vibration or wave. There was no fake about this. When I saw the light I was on the south side of Valencia street."

OVER SUTRO HEIGHTS.

Airship Seen by the Mayor's Employes a Few Days Ago.

None of those who have seen the mysterious moving lights in the heavens that are believed to be those of an airship is more firmly convinced that a flying machine hovers nightly over the bay cities than Mayor Sutro, and the story he tells to support his expressed belief is vastly interesting.

The Mayor is nothing if not practical, and he says that there is not the faintest doubt in his mind that the aerial courser passed over Sutro Heights a short time ago and that it was a genuine airship and doing a very fair job of air-sailing.

"I have not seen the ship myself," said the Mayor after the meeting of the Board of Supervisors yesterday, "but some of my people at the heights have, and their stories leave no doubt in my mind as to the truth of the stories THE CALL has published on the subject.

"Their narratives were not given me after the paper got hold of the matter, but were told several days ago when no such thing had reached public print.

"When I reached home one evening, about the length of time ago I mention, I found them in a great state of excitement, and when I inquired the reason of the agitation they told me of a strange spectacle they had witnessed a short time before. They told me that shortly after dark they had seen a strange, brilliant light coming in from the direction of the sea.

"At first little attention was paid to it, but as the light drew nearer all became very much interested and watched the brilliant spot closely.

"As it approached the heights they saw that it was not over 500 feet above the ocean and was moving swiftly and with a slightly undulating motion.

"When almost over the beach two lights were discernible, one apparently being below a misty-looking mass and the other behind it.

"They paid particular attention to the latter, as it threw a long ray of light, similar to that cast by a searchlight, far out into the darkness. They told me that this stream of light was 500 feet long, but I presume that, while it seemed that long, it was in reality much shorter.

"They watched it until it disappeared in the direction of the City and saw it turn toward the north just before it passed from view. Now, these people would not try to tell me ghost stories, and I know that they saw just what they described.

"I certainly think that some shrewd inventor has solved the problem of aerial navigation and that we will hear all about it within a short time. It would not be any more wonderful than the invention of the telegraph, the telephone, the phonograph or the X ray, and it would seem that some one must hit on the proper appliances when so many smart men have been working on the problem."

It has been stated that the airship passed over the Seal Rocks a short time ago and played its light on the seals, and it may be that this was the occasion when it was seen from the heights.

COLONEL MENTON SAW IT.

Three Lights in View as the Mystery Sailed.

Colonel W. H. Menton, the excursion agent of the Southern Pacific Company, lives in the Supreme Court building at the corner of Larkin and McAllister streets. He is confident he saw the mysterious aerial peregrinator Sunday night. This is his story as he told it yesterday:

"Last night, at about 20 minutes of 8 o'clock, the elevator-boy came to my door and told me if I wanted to see the airship to go to the window. My wife and two lady friends went at once to the window, and looking out toward the park, say at an apparent height of about 100 yards, saw three lights. One shot its rays toward the northwest, another toward the southwest, and one, the most brilliant, poured its light directly toward the earth. These lights had the appearance and intensity of searchlights.

"I am sure," continued Colonel Menton, "that it was neither a star, meteor nor any other wanderer of the heavens. The light was far brighter than any of the electric lights I saw just below, in and about the park.

"It was traveling toward the west, and we saw it distinctly for ten or fifteen minutes. We all gazed at it until it disappeared in the distance. It neither rose nor fell, but maintained an even course parallel with the earth."

CROSSED THE GATE.

And Some Time Later Was Seen Over the Twin Peaks.

M. H. Cohen of 510 Baker street, a conductor on the Hayes-street car line, saw an object in the sky at 7:05 last Sunday evening, which he believes was the airship. The object seemed to be 300 or 400 feet above the earth. Speaking of the sight yesterday he said: "I first saw it at Market and Eighth streets. It seemed to be moving across the Golden Gate and a flash was occasionally displayed. I called the gripman's attention to it, and he looked and said, "It might be the airship." Two gentlemen on the rear end of the car saw it. I told the receiver and the night watchman about what I had seen. The car left the ferry at 7:13 o'clock, and at First street I saw the object again directly over the Twin Peaks. The forward light seemed to be steady. I informed Frank Allen, the machinist at the carhouse, and he remarked that he had seen a similar object and called the attention of two ladies to it.

"I did not see the object again until I got to the top of Pierce-street hill. Then it seemed to be coming back again from Twin Peaks. We left the park at 7:51, and looking back from Ashbury street got a good view of it. A light was flashed downward for a few minutes. The night

Continued on Second Page.

DEATH OF ITALO CAMPANINI, THE GREAT TENOR.

ROME, ITALY, Nov. 23.—Italo Campanini, the singer, who was known in the United States, died at Parma to-day.

Italo Campanini was born in Parma in 1846. He enlisted in the army of Garibaldi when 14 years old, and took part in the fight before Milazzo. Having discovered during the campaign that he had a wonderful voice he studied singing for two years at the Conservatory of Parma, and made his first appearance as the notary in "La Sonnambula," at his native town. In 1869 he went to Milan and placed himself under the tuition of the celebrated teacher Francesco Lamperti. In 1872 he made his London debut as Genaro in "Lucrezia Borgia," and in 1873 sang with Christine Nilsson in New York. He returned to America during the season of 1879-80. Besides being the greatest tenor living at that time he was remarkable for the immense scope of his repertoire, which included nearly eighty operas, the tenor roles of which he could sing at a few hours' notice.

TAKEN FROM THE RIGGING

Imperiled Men of the San Benito Rescued by the Point Arena.

SIX NUMBERED AMONG THE LOST.

Survivors Almost Dead From Exhaustion When Aid Arrives.

DRENCHED FOR HOURS BY THE HEAVY SEAS.

Stories of Awful Suffering Told by Those Who Escaped With Their Lives.

POINT ARENA, CAL., Nov. 23.—Thirty-one survivors of the San Benito disaster were taken from the wrecked steamship at 7 o'clock this morning by rescuers sent in boats from the steamship Point Arena. Since 1 o'clock yesterday morning some had been hanging to the wave-swept rigging and others tenanting a small apartment in the hold, which each high sea almost filled with water. The men were benumbed and exhausted, and a half dozen of them had decided to plunge into the sea and make a last attempt to reach shore when the boat from the Point Arena stood in and they saw rescue at hand. It is now certain that only six of the crew were lost. They were:

O. W. SCOTT, first assistant engineer.

C. CONDON, second assistant engineer.

I. W. WILSON, chief cook.

JOHN SHEEHAN, forward messman.

CHARLES BROWN, coal passer.

NICHOLAS FITZGERALD, coal passer.

Those who reached shore from the wreck by swimming, or on the boat that capsized when near the beach, were: F. E. Foster, quartermaster; Charles Janson, seaman; Harry Jackson, donkeyman; Harry, Faehn, seaman; George Christopher, fireman, and Narciso Lyva, coalpasser. The rest of the crew are aboard the Point Arena, which steamed for Eureka after taking them aboard.

The San Benito lies as it did yesterday, the forward half about 100 feet from the balance of the vessel. Much of the provisions and canned goods in the storerooms can be saved if the divided hull is not pounded to pieces by the seas.

All night long efforts had been made to rescue the men from the wrecked steamship. At midnight men were sent to the town of Point Arena to make some bolts to be shot from the steamship Weott's gun. Unfortunately the steamer sent only one bullet with the gun and on the first trial the line was too tight and it broke. It was nearly morning when the men from town returned with bolts and a new line. Meanwhile those on the beach had made two large kites and had them flying over the wreck when it was light enough to see her; but at this time the boats from the Point Arena and Weott had reached the San Benito and soon every man on the wreck was rescued.

A mighty shout went up from the shore. The men yelled and danced for joy and the women, many of whom had patiently watched on the beach all night in the rain and cold, cried and laughed alternately. The whole country was soon notified of the rescue, messengers starting for town as fast as horses could run to carry the glad tidings.

The six men who reached shore yesterday tell substantially the same story. Harry Faehn, the last man who was washed overboard and pulled out of the breakers exhausted, and who required the doctor's attention for two hours before consciousness was restored, is still in a critical condition. A CALL correspondent found him at the house of Thomas Kenney, who lives near the scene of the disaster, whither Faehn was taken as soon as he could be moved. He is still dazed and believes he is on the wreck, and the doctor is afraid he will not survive.

Harry Jackson, donkeyman, and Charles Janson, seaman, say that it began blowing a gale Saturday afternoon, with a heavy shower of rain, and at times nothing could be seen a ship's length away. The deck was washed by the waves every few minutes, so that the lookout had to stand on the bridge for fear of being washed overboard.

After dark Saturday night no lights of any kind were seen, and as the ship was being worked by dead running the log showed that she was or should be four miles off and below the Point Arena lighthouse. A few minutes past 1 o'clock breakers were seen dead ahead, and, although going very slowly, before she could be stopped or her course changed the San Benito ran bow on the beach and stuck fast.

The heavy sea broke over her every moment, and each wave lifted her stern high and brought it down with a thump that shook her from end to end. Soon the vessel broke in two just aft the smokestack and the stern parted and went back on the beach about fifty feet south of the forward part, which stuck fast.

As soon as she struck the whistle was blown for any assistance that might be at hand. The whistle was kept going until she broke in two. When the vessel crashed into shore both the forward and after port boats were wrenched from their davits and crushed. The forward starboard boat, with First Assistant Engineer Charles Jansen and three others in it, was sent away to attempt a landing and get assistance.

It was capsized in an instant, and the crew left struggling in the angry waves. Jansen and one other reached the beach

The San Francisco Call

VOLUME LXXX.—NO. 178. SAN FRANCISCO, WEDNESDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 25, 1896. PRICE FIVE CENTS.

MISSION OF THE AERIAL SHIP

Will Probably Be Used to Destroy the City of Havana.

ITS DESTINY IN GENERAL HART'S HANDS.

Interesting Details of the Powers of the Mysterious Conqueror of the Air.

VAST FORTUNES IN EXPECTANCY FOR ALL CONCERNED.

Oakland People Claim to Have Seen Intricate Evolutions in Midair—Venus and Jupiter as Fair Deceivers.

Ex-Attorney-General W. H. H. Hart now has charge of the destinies of the airship, which has hitherto been under the legal wings of Attorney George D. Collins. The reason for the change is said to be due to the loquacity of Mr. Collins. The inventor, who is said to be extremely desirous of maintaining his incognito, thinks that Collins talked not wisely and too much.

General Hart admitted his new and mysterious responsibilities yesterday and then made the sensational announcement that the airship was to be used in the service of the Cuban insurgents and intimated that Havana was to be the first point of attack.

While the new custodian of the secrets relative to the aerial mystery states that he has not himself seen the wondrous invention he expresses himself as confident that it can do all that has been ascribed to it by those who claim to have seen it in operation above the earth. He expects to make a fortune out of it for all concerned within a few months.

It is now reported that the inventor is a Dr. Catlin, who was assisted in the work of construction by Dr. E. H. Benjamin.

While THE CALL is not in a position to give it as a positive fact that a successful airship has been constructed and put into operation, neither is it prepared to say that the thousands of people who claim to have seen such a thing are mistaken. In this connection it regrets that it has to call attention to two deliberate attempts of the Examiner to play upon the credulity of the people.

One of these attempts was made in Oakland on Monday and another hoax was attempted in this City last night. Both were feeble and ineffective, and acted only as boomerangs on that "Monarch of the Fakers."

Considerable excitement was created in this City last night by the mistaken idea that got abroad that the airship was visible. The peculiar flight of Venus across the western horizon and the brilliant reflection from Jupiter in the east caused this false impression.

Oakland again contributes an interesting chapter to the aerial history of the past week. Among other things it is asserted that the airship was seen performing intricate evolutions in midair.

All the secrets of the mysterious airship are now in the hands of ex-Attorney-General W. H. H. Hart. The responsibility of their keeping was legally transferred yesterday from George D. Collins to that gentleman.

Mr. Hart spoke freely and fully of the machine, but declined to divulge the name of the inventor and owner, its present location or its mechanism.

It was learned by a CALL reporter from another source, however, that the name of the inventor and owner is Dr. Catlin; that he was assisted in his work by Dr. E. H. Benjamin and George Applegate, and that the machine is housed within a short distance from San Francisco.

Attorney Collins was visited by the airship inventor yesterday morning, and according to Mr. Collins' story, the latter asked to be relieved from anything further to do with the aerial mystery. His client, he said, asked him to recommend another attorney, and the result was that a visit was paid to the office of the ex-Attorney-General, whose offices are a few flights higher up in the Crocker building. After a short consultation the mysterious client was under the legal protection of Mr. Hart.

"General, I understand that Dr. Catlin, the inventor of the airship seen in various parts of the State within the past week, has placed his interests in that wonderful creation in your hands," was the first remark addressed to the new custodian of the secret, of which the world is to-day anxiously and impatiently awaiting an explanation in detail.

After admitting that such a transfer had been made only a few hours before, the ex-Attorney-General, without further preliminary, went on and made a series of most astounding revelations in reference to the machine and its ultimate purpose. This is his story, exactly as he told it:

"There are two inventions and they are very much alike. One was perfected in the East and the other in California. I have been concerned in the Eastern invention for some time personally. The idea is to consolidate both interests.

"I have seen the machine invented in the East and I am convinced it will work all right, and from what I have been told I don't see any reason why the machine invented in California cannot be worked.

"My plan of utilizing the invention would be different from that of other people in the way of making money out of it, and in order to do so there would have to be complete secrecy in regard to it.

"I have very little doubt the California invention will work. The whole trouble in the problem of aerial navigation has been a question of motive power. In this they have the right motive power, which is without question sufficient to work the ship, and that is by electric storage batteries.

"My plan of operating this invention requires it to be kept as secret as possible. I propose to use it wholly for war purposes, and within the next five or six months it will be put to the test.

"From what I have seen of it I have not the least doubt but that it will carry four men and 1000 pounds of dynamite.

"Before it is brought into practical use, however, two important modifications must be made. It must be so constructed that if it should be injured while over a body of water and drop, it will float like a boat. The bottom will also have to be protected so that the cylinder cannot be penetrated by rifle bullets or weapons of small caliber.

"Because we expect to use it for war purposes is the reason I will not give the names of the persons who are interested in it. We don't want to be arrested as filibusters on the first trial of the machine.

"This machine will be tested in the neighborhood of San Francisco from time to time. I don't expect to see it myself or even get a look at it. I have had a full description of it, however, from the people interested. I was with them this afternoon for some time.

"I believe it can be used so that the inventor and the parties interested can make from $5,000,000 to $10,000,000 out of it in five or six months.

"Four men or two men can operate it. From what I know of it, I am quite convinced that two to three men could destroy the city of Havana in forty-eight hours.

"This machine is being tested in California owing to the favorable character of our climate. There is one drawback to the invention, and that is that the inventor cannot cause it to stand still; it must be kept moving like an arrow. Otherwise it is under perfect control. There is no doubt about this. It can be made to rise from a dead standstill. I cannot go into details about its construction, but will admit that it is of cylindrical shape, is built of aluminum and has wings, but I cannot tell you even how many wings it has.

"I do not know yet whether or not an application for a patent has been made. But if one has gone on to Washington I shall try to withdraw it, as I do not think it will be good policy for us to let the information that would thus be furnished become public, owing to the purpose for which we first propose to use it. We would rather make $5,000,000 in six months than $100,000 for fifty years.

"I am quite positive that THE CALL is right in what it has reported, but I can't say, of course, whether this machine is the one that has been seen by the people of Sacramento and other towns.

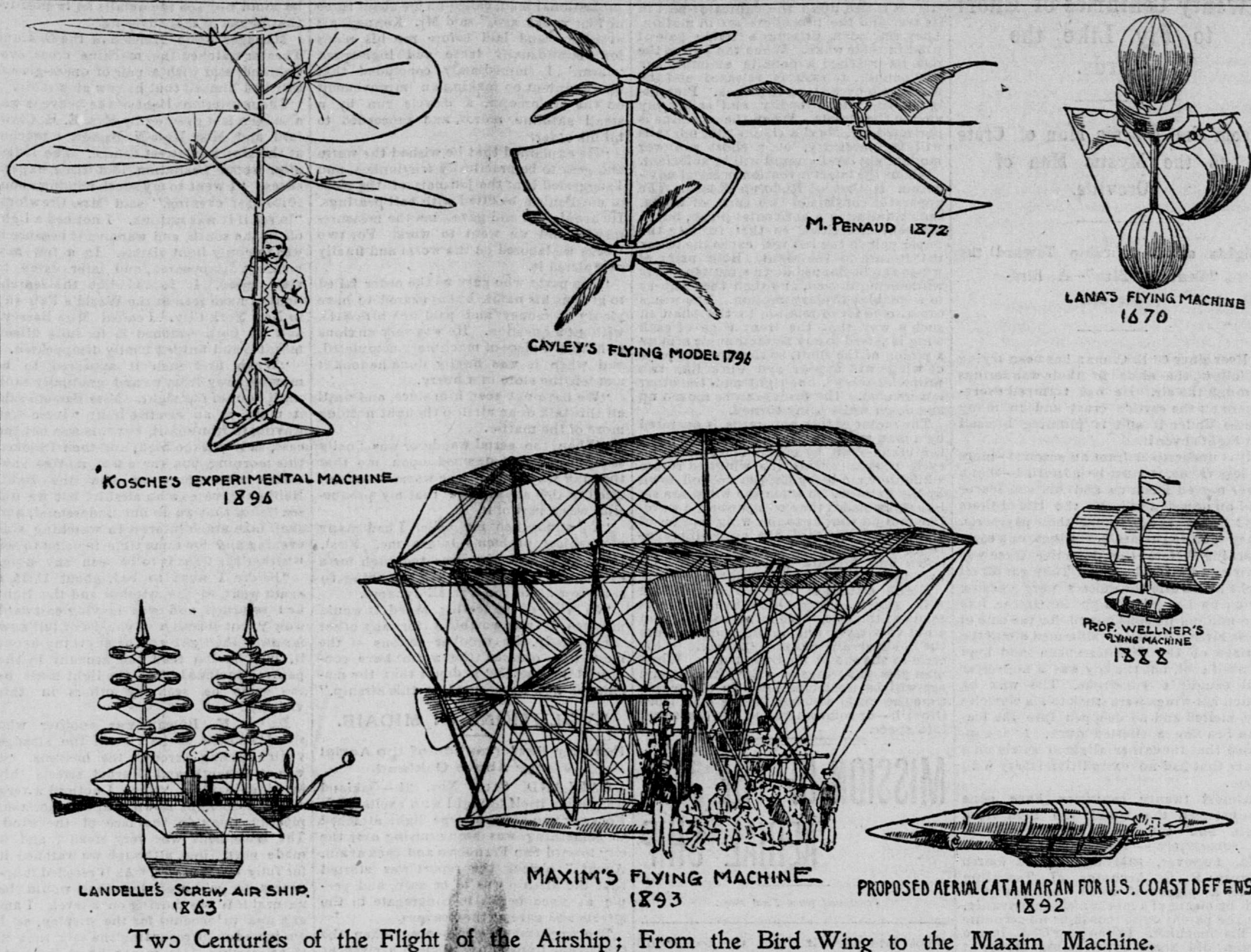
"Before the invention is put to a practical test as a war engine it will be remodeled with the changes I have suggested, and the new machine will be a combination of both inventions."

"Does the inventor, your client, sail on these trial trips that are being made?" was asked.

"That I cannot tell you, because I have not talked of this phase of the matter with him."

"How much longer will these experiments in California continue?"

"That I can't tell, but probably until they become fully satisfied with the working of the ship."



Two Centuries of the Flight of the Airship; From the Bird Wing to the Maxim Machine.

THE FIRST TRIP.

Over One Hundred Miles Covered in a Few Hours.

Probably the most interesting story told of the much-talked-of airship comes from one recently admitted into the inner circle of confidence and who it is believed carries a little bunch of airship stock in his inside pocket. It was only under a promise of concealing his identity that he consented to tell of what he knew of the recent movements of the mystery of the clouds. In speaking thereof, he said:

"One of the surprising features of the affair is that the inventor has been able to keep his invention away from the prying eyes of the public so long. As you may suppose, it took some time to construct the ship."

"Where was it constructed?" he was asked.

"Well, it is no use to keep that a secret any more than it would be for a hen to keep secret the location of her old nest after the brood is hatched and away. It was built not such a great distance out of Oroville at the home of the inventor's aunt. The statement of other parties to the effect that the material was brought from the East and put together in this State is correct. The men worked hard for some time to get the parts together in the right shape, and several short experimental flights were made to test the batteries and machinery."

"Then electricity is the power used?"

"Yes; one of the forces of nature that is made use of. The ship carries a storage battery. The hull is of aluminum. But I must not say too much about the thing itself, for I have never seen it yet. The first night that it was seen by the people in Sacramento was the first time that the inventor made a practical test of the strength, buoyancy and speed of his ship.

"He started out alone, for, to tell the truth, even his assistants were a little timid about venturing off the earth. Well, the doctor started out alone and went to a great elevation, when he discovered that one of the copper bearings was becoming heated and he wanted to get nearer the earth. He slowed up his speed and began to come down, and as he approached the earth he realized that he had lost his course to some extent, for he could not clearly make out the nature of the country over which he had been and was passing.

"High hills and low hills have about the same appearance to a man high up in the air, you know. At last he made out that he was approaching a large town, for he saw many electric lights, and in order to be sure of his bearing and location he steered straight for the lights. He soon recognized that he was close to Sacramento. To tell the truth he had dropped lower than he intended and the lights on the airship attracted the attention of a large number of people of that city.

"The next morning an account of the mysterious light in the sky over Sacramento was published in THE CALL. The people of Sacramento made one mistake, and that is they did not hear voices. It was the noise of the machinery and the hum of the wheels that they heard and mistook for voices and songs. I have no idea that the doctor either sang or talked to himself, for he was entirely alone, as I said before, on the first voyage.

"He spent the night sailing around in the sky and about 3 o'clock in the morning he landed in the barnyard of a farm situated in one of the bay counties. He put his airship into the barn and locked the door, for he had previously made arrangements to that end. The ship worked splendidly and behaved most satisfactorily. Of course there were improvements to be made and several changes were necessary. But taken on the whole everything went well.

"This was the very first trip of the new airship. Since then he has been out nearly every night, so I am told, and as he has not limited himself as to distance the ship has been seen at night by people in many localities. There, that is all I am going to tell you this time."

AN INVENTOR'S OPINION.

Dr. C. A. Smith Has No Doubt That an Airship Is Being Tested.

"Have I seen the airship? Well, I can't say that I have," said Dr. C. A. Smith, the inventor, when seen in his office in the Spreckels building last night. "But I have no reason to doubt that it is an airship the people in this City and other cities have seen in the heavens for the past few nights.

"I have been experimenting on air machines for the past forty-eight years and have invented no less than thirty useful machines, some of which have been used in every State of the Union. I know of its practicability as I have had a model running through the air.

"I expect to have machinery ready for business in the beginning of next April to make a trip across the continent. It will be 160 feet long from bow to stern and 125 feet cylinder. The main body will be 125 feet long. The front end will be a cone, as it is a scientific fact that a cone presents less resistance in passing through the air than any other solid body. The gas compartments will be in the upper portions of the cylinder and cone, and after being filled with hydrogen and acetylene gas, recently discovered, they will be hermetically sealed. The sheet aluminum to be used is lighter per square foot than the oiled and varnished silk used in making balloons.

"The rear end of the ship will be made like a frustum of a cone and the air will thus pass freely back to the propeller, which will drive the ship. In the interior will be a cabin for passengers 35 by 40 feet, entirely partitioned off from the gas. In the bow inside of the shell will be a pilothouse, from which the rudders will be operated and controlled. It will have windows, so that the pilot can see in all directions.

"A horizontal rudder of sufficient dimensions will steer the ship up or down, and a vertical rudder will steer it to right or left. Both will be on the stern. The wings will extend the full length of the cylinder and in flight will be used as aeroplanes, like the wings of the larger birds, and in crossing currents of air they will be closed. When in a light atmosphere, too light for the gas, the wings can be utilized to carry the ship up into the atmosphere.

"There will be a wellhole in the bottom for an anchor and above will be a capstan on which the rope will be wound. The ship will land by deflecting the wings and the horizontal rudder; the propeller will drive the ship forward, the aeroplane, wings and rudder steering it to the earth. It will pass above a platform where an anchor rope will be fixed, and the capstan will then draw it down onto the platform.

"I can get a Maxim engine which weighs 320 pounds and produces 180 horsepower. The ship will carry from twenty-five to thirty passengers. I calculate that the ship will run at a speed of 100 miles per hour and perhaps more.

"As to light, we can have a storage battery to give all that is necessary. The gas will be inclosed in aluminum compartments, so that it cannot escape, and this will insure permanent buoyancy, and, as a consequence, absolute safety.

"I do not know who is the inventor of the airship that people say they see flying through the atmosphere. When it is placed before the public it will, I think, be seen that it is identical with the one I have described."

VENUS AND JUPITER.

These Celestial Orbs Mistaken by Thousands for the Airship.

An amusing phase of the airship mystery was developed last night, when that inoffensive planet Venus, sinking in the west, was mistaken for the clipper of the clouds scudding across the empyrean. That the bright light which excited the curiosity of many thousands on Market street about 6 P. M. was nothing more than Venus there seems to be no room for logical doubt in view of a statement obtained from such an authority as Professor Davidson last night.

Avoiding scientific details it will be sufficient to say that the planet Venus is at this season of the year almost at the full, and may be seen any clear evening after dusk traveling rapidly from east to west until she disappears below the horizon.

As soon as the professor heard the story, shortly after 7 P. M., he got out his telescope and had no difficulty in identifying the supposed airship as an ordinary, everyday star.

At 6 o'clock last night or thereabouts the cry was raised on Market street that the headlight of the much-talked-of airship was plainly visible at a lofty altitude in the neighborhood of the Chutes. Excited groups of men and women rapidly gathered in every direction and all eyes began to scan the skies. Sure enough a bright speck of light was at once distinguished high in the heavens and at that time seeming to be out toward the west in a line with Market street. After an interval it was noticed that the light had changed its position somewhat, moving apparently west and north. Speculation ran riot, but the consensus of opinion was decidedly in favor of the airship theory, to which the gradual movement of the light seemed to lend a color of probability. A few unimaginative ones were sufficiently prosaic to suggest that the light was merely the star Venus, but the majority quickly scouted that suggestion as absurd in the highest degree.

It is safe to assume that Venus has been acting just as she did last night for many years past, but never before, as far as can be learned, has she been mistaken for an airship.

Nob Hill and various other portions of the City also had their crowds of heavenward-gazers viewing the unembarrassed Venus in the firmament. On California-street hill there were the buds and beauties of society in elegant wraps and gallants equipped with lorgnettes, while near the water front binoculars were brought into requisition.

Later in the evening Jupiter, scintillating brightly east of the zenith, drew the attention of thousands in a similar manner. Some claimed it was the airship, which had reached that position by a circuitous route.

But those who had seen what they confidently asserted were the lights of the airship declared that neither of these celestial beacons resembled the lights that had previously crossed their vision.

BERKELEY, CAL., Nov. 24.—The mysterious airship, or at least a big light that was taken for it, was seen by a large number of Berkeleyans to-night. It appeared to be hovering over the bay, and a large crowd gathered at the corner of Center street and Shattuck avenue to watch it and speculate as to what caused the light. The ship, or whatever it was, soon disappeared without allowing any of the spectators to see more than a moving light like that of a searchlight.

CHICO, CAL., Nov. 24.—Although discredited by many as being a hoax and a phantom story, yet there are many people who firmly believe in the airship. Last evening about 7 o'clock a bright and sparkling light was seen in the sky west of Chico. The light seemed to be traveling with great rapidity in a northwesterly direction. Many people living along Fifth street were out with craned necks looking at the mysterious fire, and all who saw the aerial light will vouch for the certainty of an airship.

RED BLUFF, CAL., Nov. 24.—Fully fifty people in Red Bluff are now willing to vouch for the reality of the airship. What appeared to be it passed a few miles west of Red Bluff about 7 o'clock this evening at an elevation of probably 2000 feet. In a few minutes it fell fully 1000 feet and all the time was traveling rapidly westward. It finally disappeared over the Coast Range Mountains, going in the direction of Eureka. The light only was visible and appeared to be about the size of a good-sized arc light.

FAKING OF THE FAKER.

Underhand Attempts to Discredit the Airship Story.

Just as the theatrical audiences were leaving the theaters last evening at 11:30 o'clock a balloon with a light attached to its base shot up into the air immediately over the Examiner's business office on Market street. It passed speedily along over Market street and attained an altitude of about 100 yards, when it passed over the buildings on Market street, opposite Mason. Those who saw the balloon

Continued on Second Page.

HOAR SAYS IT'S A TRUE TIME FOR REJOICING.

BOSTON, MASS., Nov. 24.—The jubilee banquet and celebration of the Home Market Club in honor of the election of McKinley was held at Mechanics' Hall this evening. A reception was held from 4:30 until 6 o'clock, when the dinner was served. About 1500 members of the club and invited guests sat down. Senator Hoar of Massachusetts was among those who addressed the meeting. He said in part:

"It takes more than one day for thanksgiving this year. No private dwelling, no church, no ordinary building can contain our joy. The campaign of strife, of dishonor, of broken faith, of sectional hate, of bankruptcy is ended as it deserved. The American people once more stand before the nations of the world for peace upon earth and good will to men. The flag which our fathers left us and our brothers saved for us without a rent was handed down without a stain. It is a good time for Union soldiers to celebrate. There is happiness again in the workman's dwelling. It is certainly a sad thing to think of States like Kansas and Nebraska, children of New England, that great farming population where we expect to find, if we find them anywhere, sobriety, integrity, steadiness, conservatism, the great communities where churches abound, and where the schools are the best in the world, should have lent themselves to this crazy attempt at revolution and this passionate crusade of dishonor."

General Alger of Michigan spoke in response to the toast, "Wrecks of the Rebellion." Among other speakers were General O. O. Howard, General Stewart of Pennsylvania and others.

FAST GOING TO PIECES

Nothing Can Be Saved From the Unfortunate San Benito.

WRECKING CREW LEAVE THE VESSEL.

High Winds and a Heavy Sea Will Soon Complete Its Demolition.

DEEDS OF HEROISM AFTER THE DISASTER.

Sacrificial Attempt of One of the Crew to Save His Companions' Lives.

POINT ARENA, CAL., Nov. 24.—About as hopeless a wreck as was ever seen on the Pacific Coast is the San Benito to-night, as her forward half lays listed to seaward with her starboard broadside to the shore and her after-half stern to the beach. Seas that measure the distance to her mastheads and even higher and pour down her funnel are leaping over her. Her pilot-house and other upper works are going to pieces. When the sun sank this evening into a tempest-tossed sea only the firm bed that the forward half has in the sinking sand prevented those terrible seas from rolling her over and over and casting her far up on the beach, scrapiron for the farmers.

Scrapiron is all the steamer amounts to now, and if the northwester which blows a terrible sea into the bight in the land where she met her doom does not abate soon even the scrapiron will disappear. The wrecker Whitelaw, which left San Francisco Sunday night, gave her up as a hopeless job and straightened away this evening on the home cruise. A telegram from Vice-President Schwerin of the Pacific Improvement Company called her in.

After the first excitement subsided it has now been learned that the steamer was a wreck thirty minutes after she struck the shore. She struck bow on, and every heavy sea that came in lifted high her stern and dropped her hard onto the sand ridge just where the water suddenly deepens. She broke off amidships between the boiler and engine rooms, just abaft the smokestack, as cleanly as a knife cuts an apple in halves. The after half lies with her gaping rents to the sea, which rushes into the open compartments with terrible velocity, threatening momentarily to slip her open. The water also rushes furiously into the interior of the forward half, and with such a nor'-wester as has been blowing all day—for there have been mountains of water and whitecaps since early morning—it seems marvelous that she has held together so long. When the clouds clear away momentarily to-night the two parts of the wreck seem like mountains of spray.

Chief Officer R. Zolling and Chief Engineer I. W. Wood drove down from Mendocino this afternoon and arrived at the hotel this evening. They came to look after any bodies that might be found, "For we have friends among the lost," said he. So far the sea has not given up its dead. No bodies have yet been washed ashore. Mr. Zolling is reticent. He said:

"There is nothing more to be said that I know of. You know it all. But it is a wonder that more of us are not dead. The captain has made a statement and that is all that is necessary."

The steamer Point Arena, on her trip to San Francisco to-morrow, will put in here at 4 P. M. to take off Mr. Zolling and Mr. Scott and six other survivors here—C. Jansen, George Christopher, H. F. Ehn, H. Jackson, N. Leyva and L. E. Foster. She will have on board the other twenty-nine members of the crew, including Captain Smith, who were taken off the San Benito yesterday morning by the Point Arena. The Point Arena is due in San Francisco early Thursday morning.

Captain Smith remarked while clinging to the rigging, Survivor Jansen says, that he could stand the strain only two or three hours longer. That was on Sunday afternoon. About this time a happy thought struck one of the crew. Watching his chance, he rushed across the deck between seas and seized an ax that hung in cleats on the ship's side below the pilot-house. Others joined him, and together they cut a hole through the bridge deck into a storeroom below. It was warm in the storeroom and there was plenty to eat. The captain and others of the crew got down through the hole, warmed themselves and ate. Every man made a trip to it when he could. It was this lucky thought and good fortune that strengthened the then hopeless men and kept them alive until the next morning.

Captain Smith was the last man but one to leave the ship. The captain was very weak and had to have assistance from above in getting into the Point Arena's small boat.

Captain Walvig of the steamer Alcatraz lay at Greenwood, fifteen miles above

The 

Call

VOLUME LXXX.—NO. 179. SAN FRANCISCO, THURSDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 26, 1896. PRICE FIVE CENTS.

HART STANDS BY HIS SHIP

A Confirmation of the Story Received From Sacramento.

THE MYSTERY AGAIN SEEN AT THE CAPITAL.

It Makes Its Appearance in the Company of the Deceptively Brilliant Venus.

JOKERS MAKE GENEROUS PURCHASES OF FIRE BALLOONS.

More New and Interesting Particulars Regarding the Local Invention Given by the Ex-Attorney-General.

Either the reputed airship is one of the most gigantic hoaxes of the age, or it is one of the most wonderful advances made in mechanical science, and is the solution of the great problem of aerial locomotion which has enlisted the inventive genius of many centuries.

Whichever it ultimately proves to be, the subject is to-day the all-engrossing topic. Greetings are tuned to this key; heated arguments are evolved out of it; wagers are laid, and even physical strife has been engendered over the question whether or not there really exists a successful aerial traveler.

Though there were many new and interesting developments yesterday, nothing has yet been brought to light that definitely and conclusively solves the mystery, and speculation continues as absorbing as for the past week or more.

Ex-Attorney-General Hart in an interview fully confirmed his interview of the day before and added much interesting information to the first statement he made. Among other things he substantiated the first reports concerning the airship which came from Sacramento by affirming on the authority of the inventor that the airship was actually over Sacramento when the people there claimed to have seen it.

Sacramento, according to reliable witnesses, was again visited by the aerial vision last night, which put Venus into the shade by the more brilliant glow of its lights.

Considerable sport was enjoyed by practical jokers last night in dispatching fire balloons skyward, but they had no more the appearance of the alleged lights of the aerial mystery than the dull glare of a candle resembles that of an incandescent light.

Venus again beguiled people at some points, but her deceptive charms have evidently been shorn of much of their power by the publication of the story of how people had been mistaking her for her earthly and more interesting rival.

HART CONFIRMS THE STORY FROM SACRAMENTO.

General Hart was as reticent yesterday as on the day previous regarding the identity of the reputed airship's inventor or his whereabouts, but was more definite in his statements as to the identity of the flying machine, whose secrets are now reposing in his breast. His words were the first uttered by any reliable person positively connecting the invention in his charge with the peregrinating lights seen in the heavens at various places during the past week.

"As I stated before," said the ex-Attorney-General, "I have not myself seen the machine in action or at rest, and I cannot at this time reveal the names of the persons connected with its invention and construction for the reasons already stated. You know the idea now is not to get it patented, but to use it for war purposes.

"I do know, however, that it made a flight last night and was seen at East Oakland by a lady, Mrs. Taylor, the wife of W. J. Taylor, who is a bookkeeper and who lives in East Oakland. She saw not only the lights, but an outline of the ship. It was also seen by others in the same locality. I do not know what the movements of the machine are to be at any particular time, but I was told by my client that I would not see him again for some days, as he intended to make experimental trips with his nvention right along for some time."

"People are inclined to be skeptical, general," remarked the reporter, "of the existence of the machine and expect some statement from you definitely connecting the lights alleged to have been seen traveling the air with the invention now in your charge."

"So far as the public is concerned," smilingly replied the attorney, "we do not care what they think of the matter. In fact, we would rather they believed it a thing of fancy. We are not asking the public for anything and do not propose to do so, and therefore don't propose to take them into our confidence."

"But your reputation is more or less at stake in view of the statements published in the newspapers and for which you have become sponsor."

"Well, all I can say on that score is that the interview with me as published in THE CALL is absolutely correct in every particular, and I will add this on the authority of a statement made to be by the inventor: He told me he actually went over Sacramento at the time the people there claimed to have seen the airship. The inventor has now practically decided to follow my advice to maintain as much secrecy as possible, and consequently I don't want to go into particulars about it."

"Where was it put together? Was it not in the vicinity of Oroville?"

"That is a question I do not care to answer."

"You have stated that you are satisfied the invention is a success?"

"Yes. I have implicit confidence in it and that it is a success, because it is very like the one I saw in New Jersey, and which I witnessed make a flight of fifteen or twenty rods."

"Did Dr. E. H. Benjamin assist in the construction of the machine?"

"I don't know Dr. Benjamin, and don't know whether he did or not."

"From what do you derive your confidence in the airship; from having seen it in actual operation, from a view of it at rest or simply from having seen the plans?"

"I have seen the plans. I have no doubt that when the machine is completed it will be a success."

"What do you mean by being completed?"

"When it is completed for the purpose for which it is now intended to utilize it—for war purposes. It would drown everybody in it if it were to fall over a body of water as it is now built."

"What are the other weak points that the inventor is trying to perfect by these trial flights?"

"From what I understand it has to be able to carry power enough to maintain itself in the air for a certain number of consecutive hours, say about six. It can now maintain itself for six hours, but not against the wind. To sail against the wind or at angles to it more power is required than to go with it. Then it lands too quickly. There is no provision for maintaining it in the air when the power gives out."

"Is it not possible that people frequently take the planets, such as Venus, Mars and Jupiter, which now appear very clearly in the sky, for the airship?"

"In all probability. The airship sometimes displays one light and sometimes three. These lights are under control and can be used as desired by the person managing the airship. I have no doubt that you will have ample and unmistakable evidence of the existence of the invention in a few days. The machine will be made plain to the public, though my advice is to keep the details of its construction secret."

How this evidence was to be presented the general did not say, but allowed it to be understood that the machine would be brought so close to the earth's surface that its shape would be plainly distinguishable, as well as the lights that are now seen.

Picking up some telegrams, General Hart called attention to the widespread and deep interest the reports of the flights of the aerial wonder have created. "Here are telegrams from two New York papers," he said, "asking me to confirm the reports telegraphed East about the invention. One of them asks for 500 words, but all I shall say in answer is that I believe the airship will be a success and that the inventor insists on secrecy, and has nothing more to say at present."



UNCLE SAM---If you will excuse me, gentlemen, I will help Major McKinley first.

ALL SACRAMENTO AGAPE.

Thousands Confident the Airship Mystery Made Another Visit.

SACRAMENTO, CAL., Nov. 25.—Again the mysterious aerial visitant made its appearance over this city this evening, and within a few brief moments the entire city was in an uproar of excitement.

The floating searchlight was plainly visible to all the gazing thousands, and it so timed its arrival as to appear at the same time that Venus, the brilliant evening star, was illuminating the heavens. The onlookers found that a marked difference existed between Venus and her strange aerial competitor. This difference consisted not only in the marked color of the lights, but also in the size of the two lights. Large and brilliant as is Venus, queen of the heavens, the light shown by the mysterious aerial visitant proved to be fully three times as large.

When the searchlight of the winged visitor first appeared it was seen moving rapidly from the northeast and heading in a southwesterly direction. As it neared the southern boundary of the city it turned directly toward the west and after passing the city went south, being distinctly visible for upward of twenty minutes. It moved with far more rapidity than it had been seen to do in its two former visits, and this would be accounted for in case it be a veritable airship by the fact of the calmness of the atmosphere, there being not a breath of wind moving at the time of its first appearance.

Later in the evening it again approached the city from the west, having evidently made a circle, and passed away to the north and east, thus completing the circuit of the city and allowing nearly all the residents a perfect view of the mysterious visitant. There were many, however, who failed to leave their houses in time to catch a glimpse of the swiftly moving light and who, when they did reach the open and gazed up into the ethereal vault, saw nothing but Venus; but the vast majority saw both—Venus and the moving searchlight.

Among the numerous groups gazing skyward this evening was one composed mainly of State officials and prominent lawyers of the city, and their expressions of amazement and, in cases, intense chagrin were very plainly expressed, often in vigorous though perhaps not eloquent or refined Saxon.

Hon. E. D. McCabe, secretary to Governor Budd, was one of this group, and as it was the first time he had witnessed the mysterious light he was correspondingly astonished. During the past week he has been inclined to laugh at the theory that aerial navigation had been accomplished, and in speaking of the subject after the disappearance of the visitant he said:

"I am simply astonished, and will not attempt to give any explanation of this mystery. The light is certainly produced by electricity or magnesia, and can by no possibility be a star or a meteor. Again, there were seconds when it flickered and disappeared entirely from view, exactly as I have time after time observed ordinary arc lights to do when the current was interrupted.

"In my judgment it certainly resembled an extra large arc light, and it moved so rapidly that I was obliged to repeatedly step back several feet in order to keep it in view over the intercepting buildings. I am not prepared to say it is an airship, although it certainly looked as though attached to a body of some kind. I can only say that I am thoroughly convinced that it is a mystery and in my judgment neither a star nor a fake."

District Attorney Frank D. Ryan viewed the visitor for the first time. After expressing his astonishment he muttered: "And there will be strange sights seen in the heavens. Wars and rumors of wars. I shall certainly attend church to-morrow, for this may be the advent of the millennium." Then laughing he said:

"That thing is too deep for me. I don't understand it. It might be that aerial travel has been accomplished. It seems as strange and improbable as were the inventions of the telephone, phonograph and electric power as applied to streetcars."

George A. McCalvy, Deputy Secretary of State, said: "I confess I am simply amazed, for ever since the first appearance of the reputed airship I have been a most pronounced skeptic. Attorney Collins of San Francisco is an intimate friend of mine, and I must confess that I have experienced considerable amusement by interviewing him by 'phone since his reported connection with the air vessel. In the language of the day, 'I have done many things to Attorney Collins,' but you may put me on record as saying that I am now fully convinced that there is more truth than poetry in the old adage 'that he laughs best who laughs last.' This light is certainly no fake and I am almost tempted to believe that the problem of aerial travel is solved."

J. A. Donlon, Assessor of Ventura County, was one of the onlookers. It required considerable persuasion to induce him to cross the street to catch a glimpse of the mysterious visitant, but the look of incredulity quickly left his face and he said: "This simply passes my understanding. That is certainly no star, and I won't attempt to offer any explanation."

Professor Dodge of Galt, who is in attendance on the Teachers' Institute, now in session, saw the light and declared that he could distinguish the outlines of a dark body connected with it, but so indistinctly as to be unable to give any idea of its shape.

Judge W. A. Henry was also an interested spectator, and also proclaims it not a fake, but a reality.

Charles T. Jones, the attorney, was a spectator, but firmly declined to give any opinion as to what the light was, except to say that he thought it was neither a star, a meteor nor a fake.

W. R. Stone of the Secretary of State's office was also deeply interested in the moving mystery. He said:

"It looks like an arc light and moves as though attached to some kind of a vessel, and is certainly neither a lantern attached to a kite nor any other kind of a fake that I can imagine. I must confess that I am stumped to find an explanation of the mystery other than that it may be an air vessel."

Such were the expressions of but a few of some of the leading men of note in this city, and thero were hundreds who stood in close proximity to these few and who uttered similar sentiments.

Lieutenant Fred Martin, commander of the Signal Corps, who was an onlooker, said:

"It simply passes all explanation, and I am fully convinced this is no fake. This afternoon two gentlemen, Messrs. Haines and Fleehart, came into my office about 4 o'clock and told me that they had just seen the airship moving over the city in a northeasterly direction. They described it as a dark, misty object, traveling at an enormous height, yet visible against the clear blue of the ether. I did not pay very much attention to their story at the time, as I was inclined to think they might have seen a cloud, but they were evidently much in earnest in their deliberations and said that no clouds were visible and that the dark object moved with great rapidity. Now that I have seen this mysterious light coming from the same direction in which they saw it going, I am rather inclined to believe that they have been eye-witnesses of some mysterious air vessel."

EX-ATTORNEY-GENERAL W. H. H. HART.

DR. BENJAMIN DISAPPEARS

The Friend of the Inventor Changes His Place of Residence.

Dr. E. H. Benjamin, formerly of 633 Ellis street, who is reputed to have considerable knowledge of the airship, has apparently disappeared, and as mysteriously as the light that so many thousands have seen in the heavens.

For two years past Dr. Benjamin had rented the front room of this lodging-house from E. H. Keiser, but yesterday the furniture, carpets and household fixtures were disposed of under the auctioneer's hammer. Where Mr. Keiser and his tenants have gone was not stated, nor was there a reason given except one given in the spirit of fun by a pretty brunette, who said:

"We have had to move for our self-protection. You see, since that airship story has been afloat, the representatives of the press have been calling here at all times of the day and night to see and interview Dr. Benjamin. Why, some of them have camped upon the front steps until 4 o'clock in the morning, and if they had not been personally known to the police no doubt the officers would have suspected that there was trouble in the house. Our house has become an object of curiosity to every one who passes, and dozens have stopped and looked up to the windows as though they expected to see the windows open and an airship or two fly out, and all because the name of Dr. Benjamin has been connected with the airship story."

"Where is Dr. Benjamin to-day?" was asked of the lady, but before she could answer the glib-tongued auctioneer chipped in and said: "He has gone to get his airship and take this lady to Europe, where he will marry her."

After the parties had joked to their own apparent satisfaction they gave this information. Dr. Benjamin left the house early in the morning—about 8 o'clock as near as they could judge. He said that he would be back at noon, but he failed to return.

Before leaving he packed up all his effects in trunks, which the auctioneer and his assistants moved into a back room there to wait until the owner should return. Those who moved his effects found in his room some refuse copper which furnished food for comment for a long time. These consisted of a lot of copper cups about the size of ferules for small canes. As these to some extent resembled percussion caps, such as are used on the end of blasting fuse, it was suggested that the little cups were a part of the material to be used, as Attorney Hart suggested, for the destruction of Havana.

The romance of these little pieces of brass was shattered, however, when it was learned that Dr. Benjamin has been experimenting upon continuous bridge-work for teeth and these little cups were the crowns for rows of artificial grinders. Many of these cups were taken away by the auctioneer's assistants for souvenirs, but upon being told that they were only unfinished store teeth the men tossed their copper cups into the street in disgust.

Dr. Benjamin did not return during the afternoon or evening and although in the evening a dim light was to be seen in one of the rooms no response was made to a call at the door. In truth the door bell was fastened on the inside. Thus Dr. Benjamin disappeared. Whether his effects have been removed or not is a matter of conjecture.

In connection with the movements of Dr. Benjamin there is one incident that apparently connects him with the inventor of the airship. It will be remembered that several people who claim to know much about the new ship of the skies have stated that it was built near Oroville and that its first flight was taken therefrom on the night that the lights were seen in Sacramento. Also that the inventor and owner is or was a wealthy resident of Oroville. The latter statement was made by Attorney Collins at the time when ex-Attorney-General Hart said that he talked too much. On that occasion Mr. Collins stated that the inventor was brought to him by a client. In the same interview he acknowledged that Dr. Benjamin was his client, Subsequently he said that Dr. Benjamin has wealthy relatives in or near Oroville.

It was learned last evening that a few days before the appearance of the airship's lights over the Sacramento Valley Dr. Benjamin went to Oroville to see his relations.

His visit at that particular time has given rise to some speculation in the mind of Dr. Joseph D. Hodgen, secretary of the State Board of Dental Examiners, of 1005 Sutter street. Last evening Dr. Hodgen said:

"I have known Dr. Benjamin for some time. He comes from Maine, I believe. He is not a regular practicing dentist, but he gives much of his time to experiments in dental work. Of late he has been at work upon continuous plate bridge work in artificial teeth, an idea he got from a dentist from Oregon.

"About two weeks ago I met him with his gripsack in his hand on the street, and he told me that he was going to Oroville or Auburn for a week. I am sure, come to think of it, that it was Oroville and not Auburn. He said that he was going to see his aunt. I have not seen him since. The day I saw him was either on the 17th or the 12th inst. Soon after that I saw the first accounts of the airship over the Sacramento Valley."

NEW CONVERTS.

Dr. Paulin No Longer a Skeptic on the Airship Proposition.

That each day is witnessing the conversion of many skeptics to the belief that the airship is a verity is shown by the willingness of these doubting individuals to become witnesses to their new faith.

Last night Dr. Paulin of 1757 Nineteenth street, East Oakland, took the trouble to telephone his interesting experience to THE CALL. He said:

"I never had any faith in the airship until to-night. About 8 o'clock Judge Horsburgh, a neighbor, called to us and told us we could see the airship. We looked out and saw above us what appeared to be a group of four or five lights and above them was outlined something which had the form of a whale. It was moving toward the City. Then it changed its course toward Sausalito, and swerved again toward the City and soon went out of sight."

A night watchman at North Berkeley says that he saw the light Tuesday night distinctly, and watched it while it traveled from San Pablo and crossed over until it was back of the high hills of Berkeley. This may give some indefinite sort of a clew concerning the place where the alleged airship may be in hiding during the day, so this man thought.

A noticeable fact connected with the mystery of the alleged airship is that the light which is observed is seen to be traveling against the wind as often as with it. This would not be the case if the light were carried by a balloon or kite, as a matter of course.

PRACTICAL JOKERS.

Lighted Balloons Sent Up in Various Parts of the City.

Toy balloons were sent soaring upward with hot air for a motor from several places along Market street last night. The wind was brisk, and when once the balloons were above the roofs they traveled along steadily and naturally attracted some attention.

Soon, however, the fuel which gave them motion consumed the balloon. There was no one who was stupid enough to believe for a moment that any such proposition as that had been sufficient at any time to deceive the many who have ascribed to the mysterious airship the posession of a large electric light. Those who sent up the fire-balloons on Market street last night soon tired, observing that little interest was taken in them.

Several persons with apparently an idea of having a little fun at the expense of the public went to the top of Nob Hill last evening about 9:30 o'clock and sent up a hot-air balloon with a Japanese lantern attached to the bottom.

Instead of mounting rapidly to a great height the thing wabbled around and floated off on the wind over Kearny street toward the bay. For half a mile it scarcely rose 300 feet, and its construction and shape were plainly seen. The people on Kearny street jeered at the fake article floated over them, and several suggested that Mr. McEvoy of the American Detective Agency had changed his place of operation from Inspiration Point, near Piedmont, to Nob Hill, San Francisco.

A local fireworks company reported to-day that they had been doing a big balloon business within the last few days. In fact they have sold more of this kind of fireworks within a week than they have since the Fourth of July. Purchases have been made by people from Alameda, Haywards, Fruitvale, Oakland, Berkeley and San Francisco.

AGAINST FAKERS.

A Vigilance Committee Formed in the Mission District.

Public interest in the airship is growing every day and with witless practical jokers people have no patience.

The prevalence of small hot-air balloons, carrying dingy lights across the darkened heavens, imposing on the credulity of persons looking for an aerial wanderer, has led to the forming of a vigilance committee. The committee is at present composed of but four members—James Peoples, Ed Perley, Gus Skelly and N. L. Peoples, and is known as the Mission Dolores Vigilance Committee. Although the organization has but few members each member is capable of making it thoroughly interesting for any man caught in the act of releasing a miniature gas-bag. The most enthusiastic member is James Peoples, the captain, who measures about six feet four inches and is built in proportion. He is looking for and is anxious to meet a practical joker with a balloon under his arm. Then the trouble would commence.

"We take an occasional trip to Twin Peaks in search of balloon men," said Mr. Peoples, last evening, "but as yet we have not captured one.

"If we do find one all four of us (we measure all together something like twenty-four feet six inches) will jump all

San Francisco
The Call

VOLUME LXXX.—NO. 181. SAN FRANCISCO, SATURDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 28, 1896. PRICE FIVE CENTS.

IT FLITTED OVER SAN JOSE.

Aerial Lights Cross the Vision of Prominent Residents.

THEIR APPEARANCE MOST VIVIDLY DESCRIBED.

General Hart Takes Some of His Professional Friends Into His Confidence.

ATTACHES A BALLOON TO THE WARSHIP OF THE AIR.

The Public May Be Given an Aerial View of the Great Mystery of the Day at a Prearranged Time and Place.

Interest in the great aerial mystery continues without sign of abatement. It still furnishes the main theme of discourse in all circles. Many are ready to make oath and stake all their earthly possessions that a veritable flying-ship has been hovering above the earth in this vicinity, while the scoffers are also in evidence, equally vociferous and insistent.

As yet, however, nothing has transpired that can be accepted as either positive proof or disproof of the existence of an aerial voyager, operated and controlled by human inventive genius.

San Jose has furnished one of the most interesting reports of the mysterious aerial lights that have yet been published. The strange moving illumination was seen there by a number of men of the highest standing in the community, and the description of the phenomenon given by them is both vivid and clear.

General Hart now states that the inventor is a cousin of the electrician of General Antonio Maceo, commander of the patriot forces in Cuba. He also contributes much additional information relative to the reputed warship of the air and has promised to intercede with the inventor to have the invention appear at a prearranged time and place for the purpose of gratifying the deep and widespread curiosity of the public.

PROFESSOR WORCESTER'S EVIDENCE.

The Well-Known San Jose Educator Scrutinizes the Mysterious Flier and Gives the Result of a Calm Examination.

SAN JOSE, CAL., Nov. 27.—An interesting account of the mysterious moving light which passed over this city Thursday evening, and which is supposed to be attached to an airship, is given by Professor H. B. Worcester, president of the Garden City Business College. Professor Worcester resides with his family in East San Jose. To a Mercury reporter who asked him regarding the strange light, he said:

"There was a small party at my house in East San Jose on Thanksgiving day and dinner was prolonged until about 7 o'clock in the evening. The company then repaired to the front of the house to enjoy some music and I went into the rear yard to get a lantern. I happened to look up and saw several miles away, apparently about over College Park or Santa Clara, a large light moving rapidly toward San Jose. In a second I surmised it was the mysterious light which people had seen and which was supposed to be attached to an airship. In order to call the attention of those in the house to the same I ran round the house to save time and called out that the airship was passing. Everybody rushed out into the front yard.

"Within the time it had taken me to run around the house the light had changed its course from east to southwest and had traveled several miles and was in a line over the southern portion of San Jose. The entire party saw the moving light and saw it go west, then turn south and then change to southeast. We watched the light until it disappeared behind the horizon.

"When the ship turned to the southeast I could distinguish two lights, one behind the other. The single light first seen was about the size of an engine headlight and had more the appearance of a large incandescent light than anything else. It was moving at the rate of from 60 to 100 miles an hour and it was only a few moments before it had disappeared behind the horizon.

"There were three things regarding the light which impressed me, viz.: Its velocity, its regular movement and its apparent intelligent control. The motion of the light would suggest the alternate flapping of wings.

"I have seen many fire-balloons, but the light I saw had none of the characteristics of such a toy. Its velocity was too great for a balloon on such a still night and its movements too regular. The light was about 1500 feet high when first seen and may have continued at that elevation, but it appeared to lower as it disappeared on the horizon."

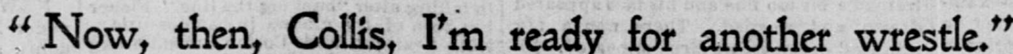
Professor Worcester stated that his party consisted of Professor M. S. Cross of the University of the Pacific, Mrs. Dr. Allen, Mrs. Colonel Moore, Miss Annie Chase, Harry Worcester and himself. All of these, he said, saw the mysterious light and expressed their belief that it was under intelligent control. Among others who saw the sight was a party at Bella Vista, near Alum Rock, composed of Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Baker, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Rengstorff of Mountain View, Mr. and Mrs. Bert M. Babcock and Mr. and Mrs. Elton.

SAN JOSE, CAL., Nov. 27.—John Bawl, a farmer who bears the reputation of being practical and unimaginative, declares that he saw the airship in flight over his residence in East San Jose, on Monroe street, near Franklin, Thursday evening, and though it was moving rapidly and was at a considerable altitude, he was able to plainly distinguish its general outline and most striking features. He describes the great winged ship with vividness and realism. His wife and family corroborate his story.

"I was standing in the rear of my residence about 7 o'clock, or shortly before that," he said, "when my attention was attracted by some bright object in the sky about 150 yards distant, and bearing rapidly toward me from the northwest. I looked at it closely and observed it was lunging about from side to side, sometimes swerving sharply to one side, but always maintaining a general southwesterly direction. It occurred to me that this was the famous airship, and I shouted lustily to my family and they all witnessed it as it came over our residence. It was so high up I could form no very definite idea of its size.

"It had a pair of wings which were constantly flapping not from side to side like a bird's, but with more of a forward and downward motion. Beneath it several feet hung a ball of red light which lit up the bottom of the ship and sent its rays far down below it. At the front was a cone-shaped projection which I surmised was a windbreak. The vessel lunged badly and once made a beeline to the west, but regained its course again. It varied in height considerably during the time I watched it. Its speed I judged to be about that of an electric-car doing its best."

Mrs. Bawl tells a similar story of the strange voyager of the air.


"Now, then, Collis, I'm ready for another wrestle."

NEARING SOLUTION.

General Hart May Give the Public an Aerial Exhibition of the Mystery.

Ex-Attorney-General W. H. H. Hart came a step nearer to disclosing the name of the inventor of the reputed successful airship yesterday. He also gave many new details regarding the marvel, and promised to confer with the inventor with the object of bringing the wonder of the air within the observation of the public at a prearranged time and place.

"Interest in the airship, general," remarked the reporter to the legal captain of the aerial warship, "continues unabated, and the public are anxiously awaiting more definite news in reference to it. They are demanding something more tangible than aerial lights at night."

"I am sorry that I am still unable to tell you all you want to know. I can tell you this, however: The inventor is a cousin of John Linn, the electrician of the Cuban patriot general, Antonio Maceo. Linn is now, of course, in Cuba, but was formerly a resident of Chicago, and is an American citizen. The inventor is not a Californian, but came here, owing to our favorable climate, to make tests of and perfect his machine."

"It is admitted that the power problem is the great one in aerial navigation, and in view of this a detailed description of the Fargo storage battery which you state is to be used on the improved and remodeled craft would be interesting," suggested the reporter.

"I would be glad to comply with your suggestion, but we have only made application for a patent for this storage battery in this country, and to expose its composition and construction would interfere with the procuration of foreign patents on it. I reiterate, however, that of my own knowledge I know that the Fargo storage battery has sufficient capacity to furnish power for a flying-ship, if the latter can be constructed to fly at all. This arrangement is different from all other methods that have been heretofore tried. No acids are used at all, and it will store electricity in any amperage and voltage. A 20-horsepower battery to run ten hours can be made to weigh 150 pounds, and to run six hours the battery would need to weigh not more than 100 pounds. Tests have been made which prove this. The man who invented the battery is not the man who invented the airship."

"Why not have the inventor, in order so satisfy public curiosity, bring his winged craft over a certain place at a certain time, giving him sufficient latitude for delays and baffling air currents? His programme could be announced through you to the public. He would thus run no risk of identification, nor would his invention be in danger of being exposed. Such an arrangement would be most gratifying to the public, and would, at the same time, most conclusively substantiate all the claims made on his behalf."

"He don't care to submit his invention to the public, and is perfectly indiffer nt to what the public thinks. I have an arrangement to see him on Monday, however, and will then endeavor to have him carry out the plan. When I last saw him he said he was going south to test his machine in the higher altitudes. He is experimenting on the difference between the heavy atmosphere near the ocean and the lighter air on elevated plains. You see he is preparing to carry out precisely what I have said in reference to Havana. I know he can and will do it, and he is not going to give out a description of his invention until he makes the attempt on Havana. I am quite convinced he will be at Havana within sixty days with one of those ships equipped to do what he says it can do."

"This plan, then, of destroying Havana is a preconceived idea of his?"

"Certainly; and he came out here to work it out. I did not know him before he came to me on this matter, though I know his friends."

"Have you had any applications to sell stock in connection with this invention?"

"No, and there is none to sell. I asked my client if he wanted to sell any stock and he said no. He added that he had all the money he wanted, and did not care to take in any person or organize any company for the present. This was the only thing that gave me the impression that he might be off his pins. He is the first man I have struck of that kind in California. But I am quite convinced that he is not crazy nor a crank. He is thoroughly cool and logical in all he says, and his entire conduct is such as to inspire perfect confidence in his invention and faith in what he says."

In response to an inquiry as to how he looked, General Hart said he has a dark complexion and bears considerable resemblance to Arion, now performing at the Chutes.

HART GETS CONFIDENTIAL.

Discloses New and Important Features of the Aerial Mystery to Professional Friends.

General Hart told a cluster of friends, principally professional men, gathered in the Supreme Court rooms yesterday something more about the airship which his client has in view. "My client says that he has built one airship and has successfully navigated it," said General Hart. "The first ship cost him $15,000. He says that he will now construct a second airship in the locality of Bolinas and that the expense will be $30,000.

"So far as I know, the second ship will resemble the first. I am now willing to make public some more facts concerning the general structure of the ship which has been operated in this locality recently. The sustaining power is supplied from gas tanks, which are in the hull of the vessel and which are connected with the balloon which flies over the airship by a pipe. When the inventor wants to go up higher he lets more gas into the balloon out of the tanks, which are filled with condensed gas.

"When the inventor wants to fly lower he simply opens a valve in the balloon and the contrivance naturally descends, just as an ordinary balloon does. It appears to me that the unsafe part of the whole contrivance is this reliance upon the balloon, which is all that keeps the ship up. If the balloon would fail down would go the ship. For this reason I am frank to say I would not care to take a ride in the airship. Do I believe that the airship actually exists? Why, certainly!

"The inventor says that he has traveled 120 miles in the air in about six and a half hours, which is a little over twenty miles per hour. His storage battery he uses for power only to propel his airship when he is sailing against the wind. When he is running with the wind or a few points off he needs no power, but naturally drifts, just as a balloon would.

"I believe that four pounds of dynamite thrown vertically downward from the deck of the airship would make terrific havoc among an enemy gathered below the ship. The dynamite throwing could be done most easily by hand. All that would be necessary would be simply to drop it.

"The condensed gas serves no purpose except to raise the airship. It has nothing to do with propelling it in any other direction.

"It may or may not be possible for my client's airship to sail the air from Key West to Havana. He thinks that it is possible. Whenever he arrives in Cuba his power would be nearly exhausted. Therefore it would be necessary for him to have a Cuban base of power supply. The location may be something like thirty miles from Havana. That would seem to me to be about the proper distance."

WAS NOT A PLANET.

Observations by a Clever Watcher of the Mysterious Light.

The following communication has been received:

Editor Call—DEAR SIR: As public attention is at present very much taken up with the recent appearances of a strange light in the heavens here and in neighboring places, I venture to offer one or two observations made by myself personally on the occasion of the appearance of the strange light in the western sky some few nights ago, which attracted so much attention among our citizens. These observations you may take for what you may think them worth, merely prefacing my remarks by saying that in years gone by I made somewhat of a study of astronomy, and took quite an interest in the heavenly bodies and their movements.

On the night in question I was one of a group of persons stationed near the edge of the sidewalk in front of the Flood building, southwest corner Fourth and Market streets, watching a strange bright light in the western heavens. At first it seemed to me as though I had sometimes seen the evening star look nearly as large and bright, and so I remarked to a gentleman in my immediate vicinity. But a closer observation seemed to show that it had not the steady and serene rays that mark the light of a planet. It was observed for brief intervals from time to time, and its altitude when I first observed it seemed to negative the idea of any terrestrial obstruction.

I then decided to make a practical test and take the bearings from some fixed object, taking the small building with its turret-like cone that forms a gore at the south side of Eddy street, at its junction with Market, and maintaining my position by a telegraph-pole at the edge of the sidewalk.

The light appeared to be in a straight line from where I stood with a point directly over the aforesaid turret-like roof that crowns the gore at the southwest corner of Eddy and Market streets. I soon observed that the light moved from over the point of the roof in an easterly and northerly direction, until at last it had crossed the path in the sky corresponding to the width of Eddy street, when it disappeared around the corner of the Baldwin Hotel.

The gentleman above referred to observed the same thing, and remarked that by stepping backward he could see it again.

This test proved conclusively to my mind that the light observed was not that of a planet, for if any one ever saw Venus or any other planet travel from the westward in a northeasterly direction he must have observed a phenomenon not recorded in ancient or modern times.

You may insert the above, if you deem it of sufficient interest, in your valuable paper.
Yours respectfully, AUSTIN R. REID,
219 Geary street, City.

MODESTO HAS IT.

Prominent Citizens See What They Believe to Be Lights of the Aerial Destroyer.

MODESTO, CAL., Nov. 27.—Residents in the northern part of this city were treated to a sight of what was undoubtedly the flying machine at 10:30 o'clock last night.

J. E. Ward, cashier of the First National Bank, discovering what he believed to be the lights of the flying machine, aroused his neighbors, all reputable men, among whom were County Treasurer W. A. Downer, Deputy Treasurer W. B. Bell, C. P. Schafer, the bookkeeper of the First National Bank, Armory L. J. Maddux and others. The lights were seen at a considerable height, going in a northwesterly direction toward Stockton. The lights moved steadily and at an even height from the ground.

SEEN AT TACOMA.

Sighted Near Mount Tacoma—Vari-Colored Flashes.

TACOMA, WASH., Nov. 27.—The airship phenomenon which has startled San Francisco has appeared here. Several reputable people have observed it. They believe it is an airship and that the inventor has either made two models and set one up in this neighborhood or was taking an evening spin from California to Pu et Sound.

The airship seen here resembles that described by California witnesses in every particular. It possesses the same birdlike shape and moves swiftly with an up and down wavelike motion, varied occasionally by a dart forward and some times in slanting directions.

Last Tuesday night the operator of the airship is believed to have visited and explored the top of Mount Tacoma. Tuesday night Druggist George St. John closed his drugstore on Pacific avenue at 11:30 and went home. He reached his residence on Tacoma avenue fifteen minutes later and soon retired. It was a beautiful moonlight night and the window curtains a few feet away from the bed were left up.

Just about 12 o'clock Mrs. St. John saw the strange light and called her husband's attention to it. It appeared to be high up in the heavens east of Mount Tacoma and moving in a southeasterly direction. The

Continued on Second Page.

WE SHOULD HAVE A SECRETARY OF MINING.

Senator Mitchell of Oregon Is Heartily in Favor of the Creation of the New Department.

To the Editor of THE SAN FRANCISCO CALL:

I have long believed there should be in our Government a Department of Mining, and am of the opinion that the day has arrived when the subject should be brought to the attention of Congress and urged. The mining industry is a very important one in this country, and the various subjects pertaining to this important industry, now considered and treated of in but a perfunctory way in the main in different bureaus of the Government, should be concentrated in one grand department, with a general head, similar to the Department of Agriculture. I stand ready to co-operate with any Senator or member of the House at the coming session who may be disposed to take the lead in the matter.

Portland, Ore., November 23, 1896.

John H. Mitchell

CUBANS ARE REJOICING

Defeat of Weyler Brings Fresh Hope to the Patriots.

FURTHER DETAILS OF CARNAGE.

When the Captain-General Retreated He Left a Thousand Dead on the Field.

AGAIN THE BUTCHER-LEADER GOES TO PINAR DEL RIO.

If Uncle Sam Recognizes the Insurgents the War Will End in Three Months.

NEW YORK, N. Y., Nov. 27.—The Jacksonville dispatch giving the details of the two bloody battles recently fought between Maceo's forces and those of General Weyler in Pinar del Rio caused great rejoicing among Cubans here to-day. Official details of the fighting have not been received by the Junta, but it is expected that Colonel Jose Reyes, with Maceo's dispatches to the delegation, will be here tomorrow.

Horatio Rubens, who is counsel for the Junta and very close to Delegate Palma, talked to-day. Senor Palma himself was too busy.

"We do not care to boast of the victory," he said, "as we have only the newspaper accounts of it as yet to enable us to judge of its importance. There is no reason to doubt, however, that the report is substantially correct."

A Times special from Key West says: It is now positively known in Havana that General Weyler and his army have been defeated by Maceo and his forces in the province of Pinar del Rio. Full details of the battle are lacking, but it is known to have been the most disastrous of the revolution.

The battle was desperate, and General Weyler, seeing his men were fighting at a disadvantage and were being slaughtered, ordered a retreat, leaving over 1000 dead and taking his wounded with him. More than 1000 wounded men reached Havana Wednesday night, and several trainloads are en route. Weyler's troops are said to be demoralized.

HAVANA, CUBA, Nov. 27.—Captain-General Weyler left Havana at 12:30 o'clock this morning for Mariel on board the Legaspi. He is accompanied by his chief of staff and adjutant. Other members of the general's staff left Havana by train this morning for Artemisa.

General Weyler returns to the province of Pinar del Rio for the purpose of renewing the campaign against the insurgent forces of Maceo in that province, which was begun under his personal command.

MADRID, SPAIN, Nov. 27.—General Weyler has made an urgent request for a regiment of cavalry, and it will start for Cuba in December.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Nov. 27.—The Spanish legation has no intelligence confirming the report that the Spanish gunboat Baracua has captured three boats laden with insurgents and arms off the the province of Santiago de Cuba. It is thought at the legation that if there be any foundation for the report the boats contained American refugees who were trying to effect a landing. The legation officials give an emphatic denial to the Key West dispatches which state that General Weyler and his army were ambushed while marching through the Rubi Mountains and that the Spanish loss was fully 1000.

FIGHTERS FOR CUBA.

They Will Go to the Island and Soon Settle the War.

CHICAGO, ILL., Nov. 27.—An afternoon paper publishes a interview which purports to come from the local Cuban agent. The agent states: "As soon as the Cuban's claim to independence is recognized, 10,000 fighting men will go from this country to aid them. These recruits will be obtained here. There are plenty of Americans who will enlist. No others are wanted. If any Americans are caught by the Spanish after recognition by the United States they will have to give them the privileges of prisoners of war, which Americans cannot get now. Within three months at the longest after the United States takes such action Cuba will be free. No attempt will be made to reac President Cleveland, but Major McKinley is pledged to our cause, and the Government will be influenced to take the necessary steps."

The Cuban agent here is said to be directing changes which will be made in the mechanism of a new rapid firing gun of extra penetrative power, invented by an Iowan named McLean, and negotiations are pending for Cuba to receive a large supply of the new firearm if it is successful. A local company is said to stand ready to turn them out as soon as the gun is accepted. Chairman Cragin of the local Cuban relief committee said the newly revived league would prove a powerful ally to the Cubans, and he intended to inquire of Senor Palma in New York if the present line of agitation should be continued.

FOR THE PURCHASE OF CUBA.

Palma Says Patriots Are Willing to Purchase Freedom.

NEW YORK, N. Y., Nov. 27.—Thomas Estrada Palma, the Cuban delegate to the United States, when seen yesterday practically confirmed the story published by the Senor Jose de Arma-Cardenas to the effect that he had, on behalf of the Cuban patriots, made a proposition to Prime Minister Canovas for the purchase of Cuba from Spain. Senor Palma says he had two interviews with Canovas and that the proposition was considered, but